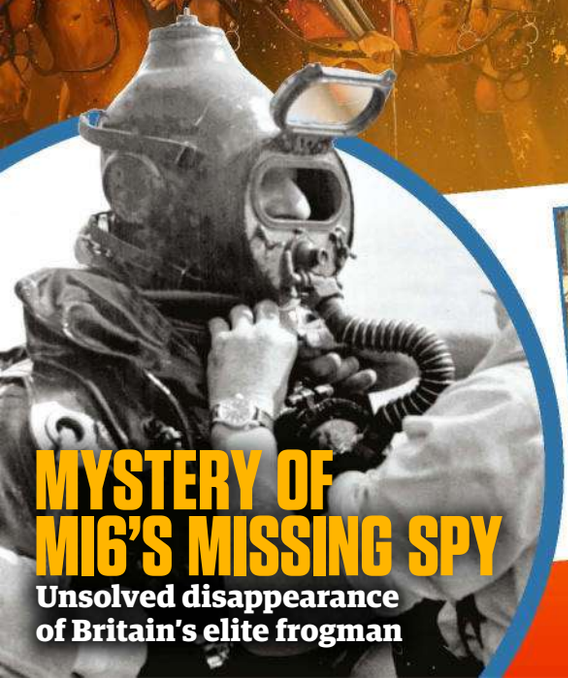
ALL ABOUT HISTORY

DEADLY FASHION
Looks that killed (literally)

Rise of the MONGOLS

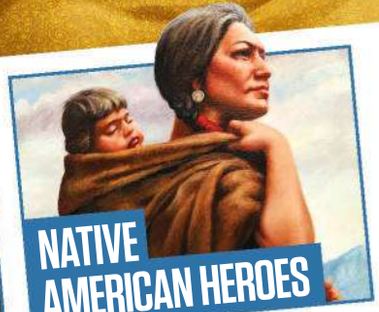
How Genghis Khan forged an empire that sought to span the world



MYSTERY OF MI6'S MISSING SPY
Unsolved disappearance of Britain's elite frogman

SECRETS OF ANCIENT CULTS
From strange initiations to raucous rituals

MEDIEVAL LOVE STORY
12th-century romance that will melt your heart



NATIVE AMERICAN HEROES
Men and women who stood up for their people

PLUS...

- WHAT IF JAPAN REMAINED ISOLATIONIST?
- NEW WORLD WITCH HUNT
- BATTLE OF SHIPKA PASS

FUTURE
ISSUE 133

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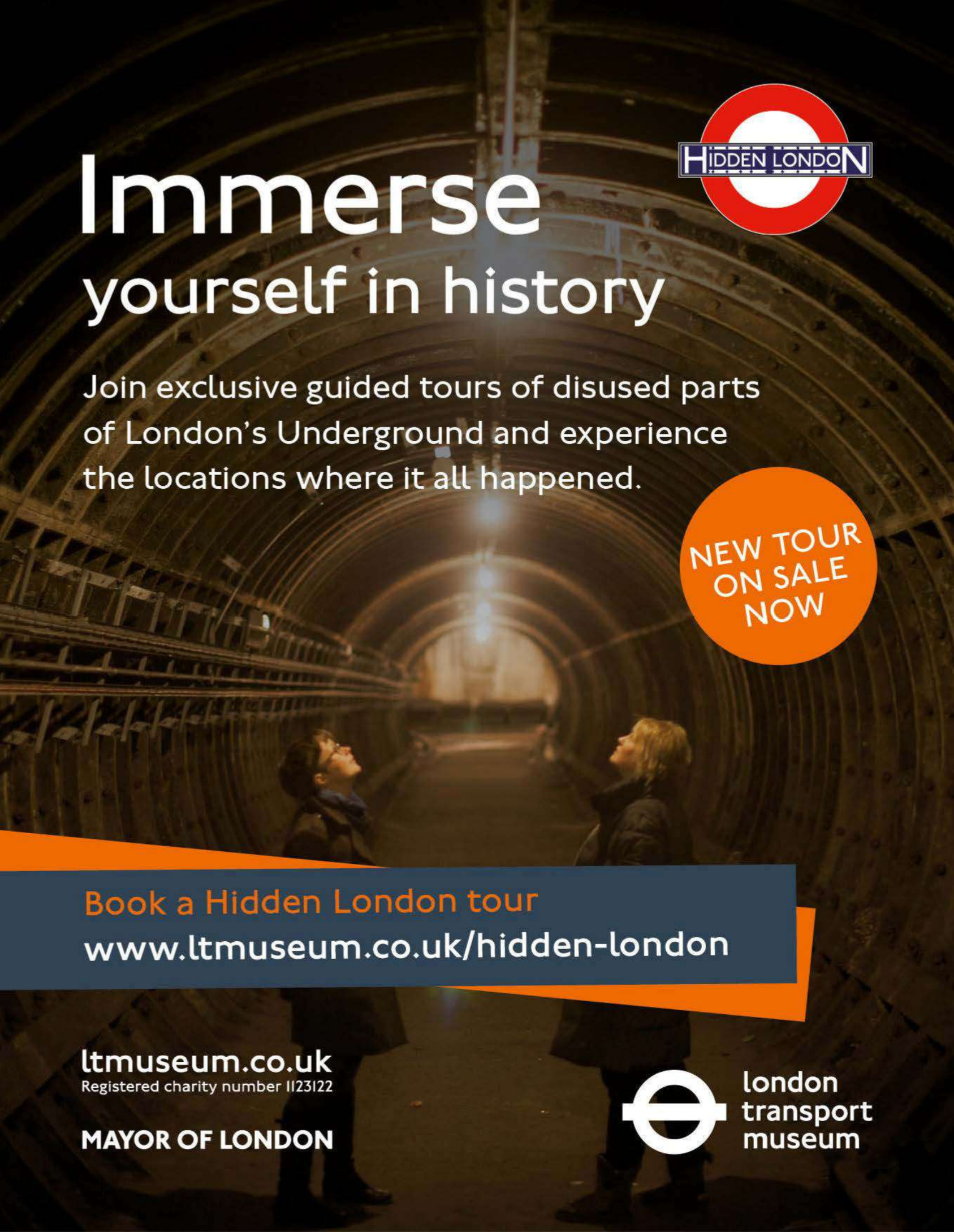
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This sculpture of Genghis Khan designed by Dashi Namdakov was unveiled in 2012 at Marble Arch, London

Welcome

We spend a fair amount of time and space in this magazine talking about rulers. Those with power and control are often seen as the ones who shape history. That's not entirely true, but they can be helpful avatars for movements. However, there are those leaders whose personal impact is very hard to deny. Genghis Khan is one such figure, leading his originally nomadic people on a path to creating the largest contiguous empire in the world. The dynasty he established for his own people as well as the influence his movement had on every region his rule touched is undeniable. Unsurprising then that he exists almost more as a myth than a man in many people's minds.

Hopefully we can cut through the fog of the legend of the man once known as Temüjin this issue. We welcome the expert analysis and insight of John Man once again, who has written extensively on the history of the Mongol Empire and its rulers. We also discover some ancient mystery cults, warn you off some deadly fashion trends from the past, learn about a great medieval romance that has echoed through the centuries, and go looking for a lost WWII hero known as Commander Crabb. And that's only a fraction of what you can look forward to reading in the coming pages, so I'll let you get on with it. I hope you enjoy the magazine.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor

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Printed by Wyndeham Peterborough, Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE1 5YS

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk
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ISSN 2052-5870

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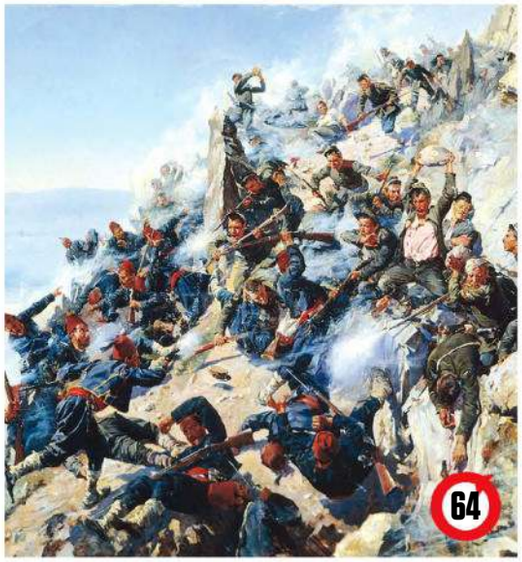

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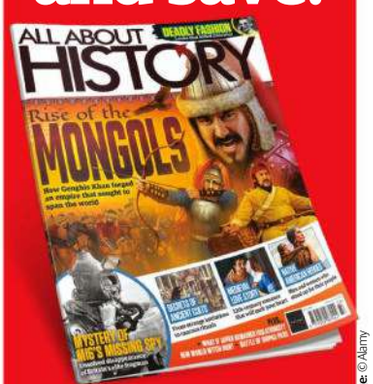

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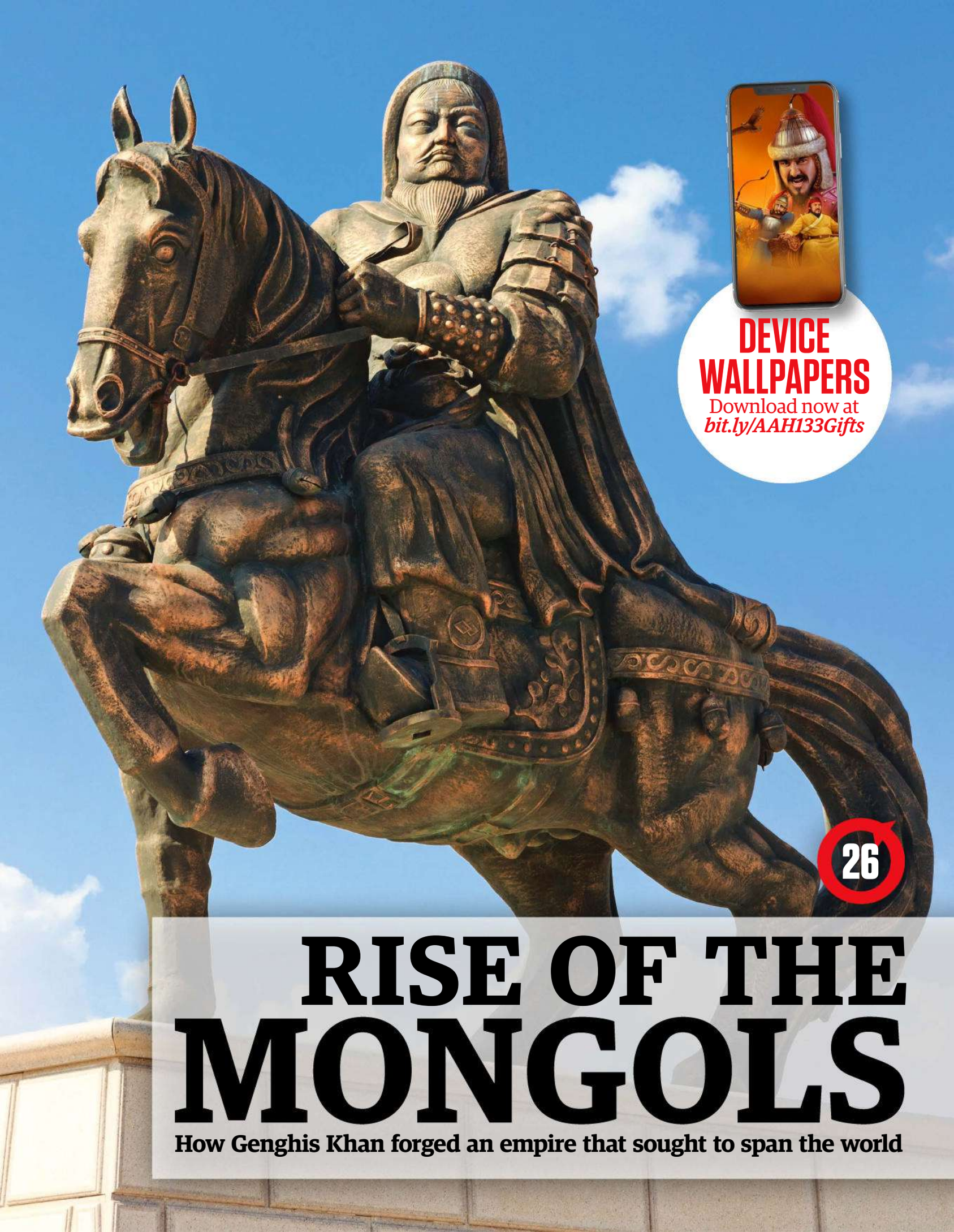

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How Genghis Khan forged an empire that sought to span the world

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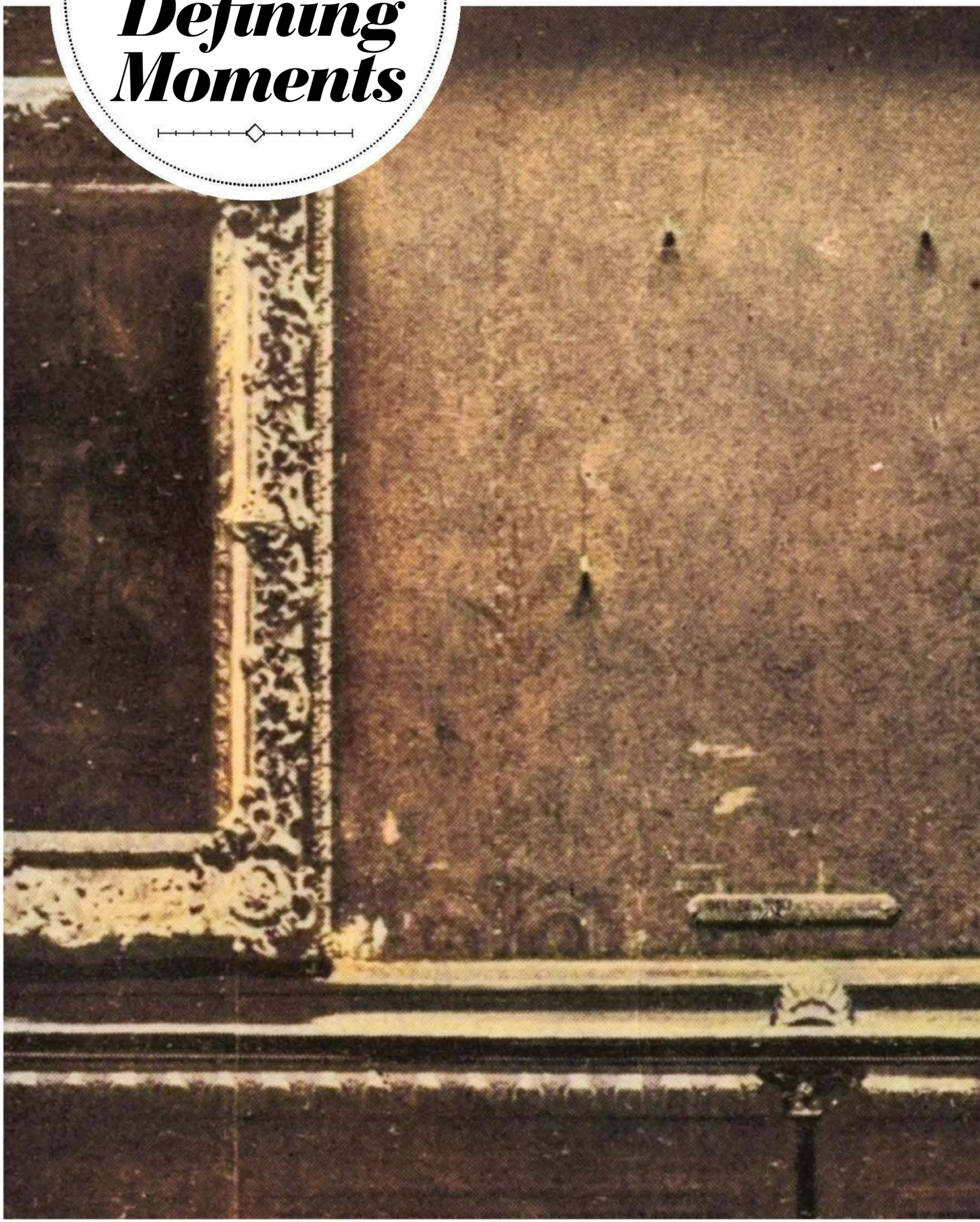
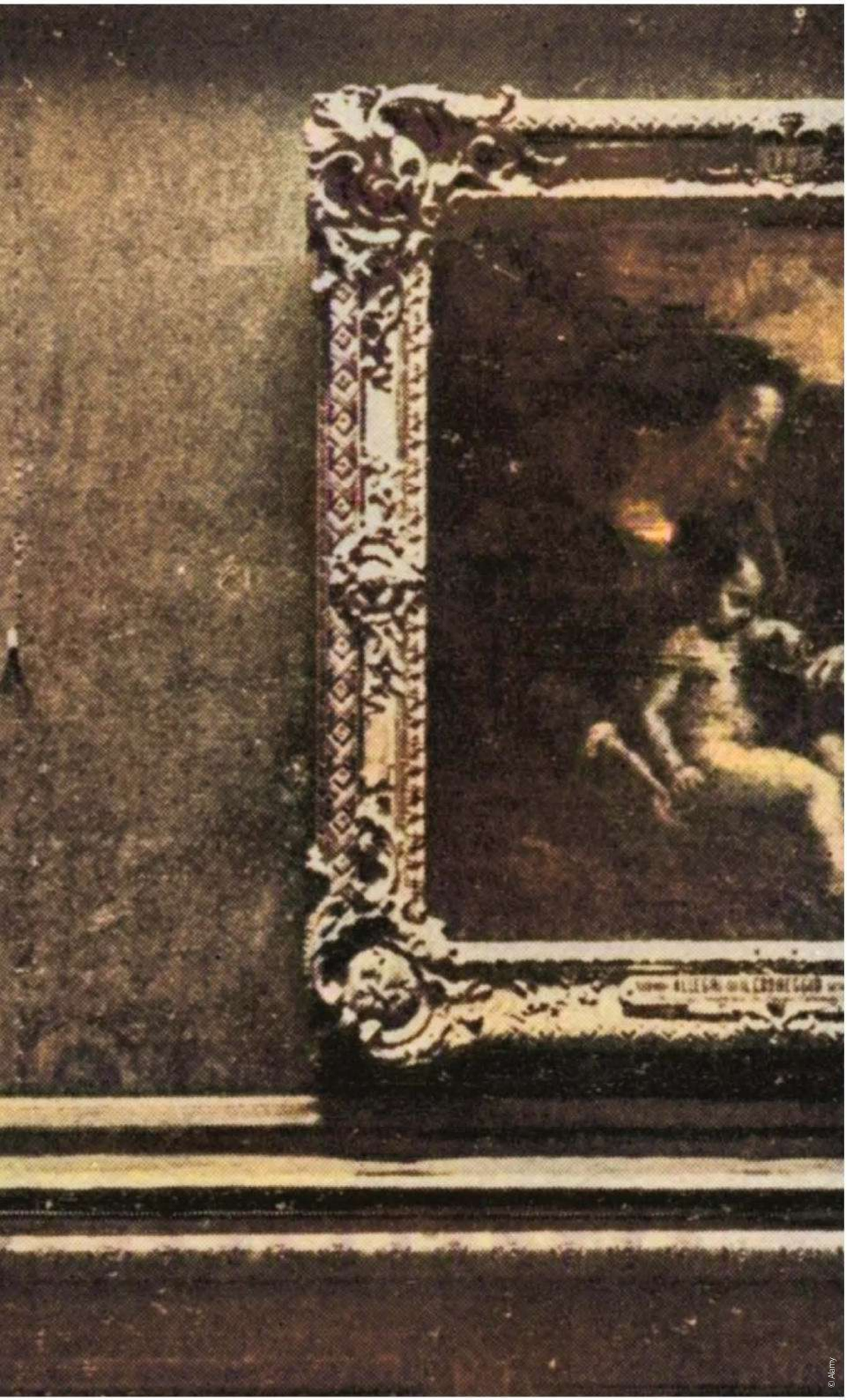
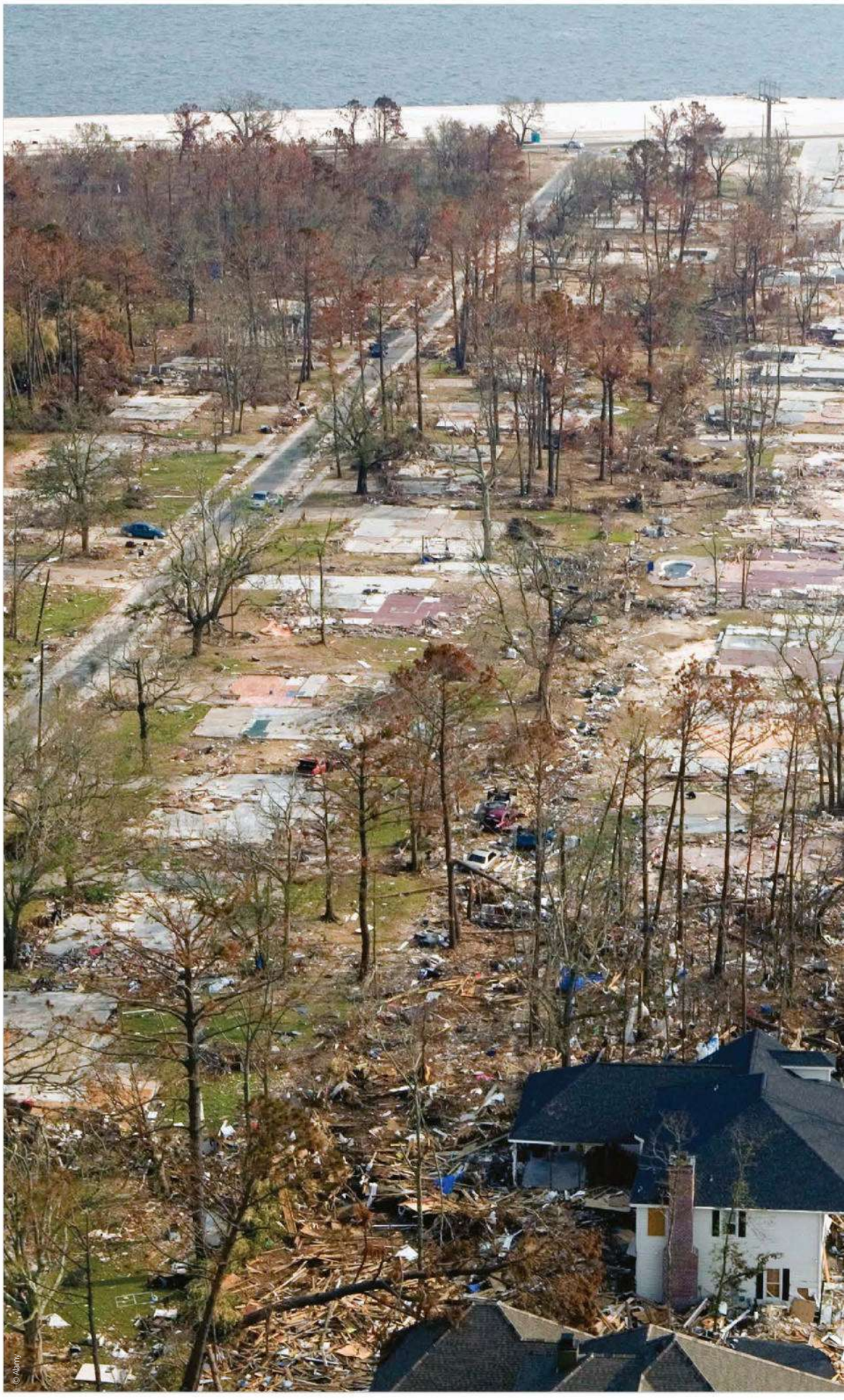




21 August 1911

MONA LISA STOLEN

In 1911 the *Mona Lisa*, painted by Leonardo da Vinci, was stolen from the Louvre in Paris. The crime caused a media sensation as the police investigated. Two years after its disappearance, Italian museum worker Vincenzo Peruggia, who had worked at the Louvre, attempted to sell the *Mona Lisa* to an art gallery in Florence. He was arrested but claimed that he had only wanted to return the painting to its homeland in Florence. The theft helped to make the *Mona Lisa* the famous work it is today.



29 August 2005

HURRICANE KATRINA HITS NEW ORLEANS

The storm known as Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, Louisiana after initially hitting the city on 29 August 2005. Though there had been prior warning of the oncoming storm, it was not possible for the entire city to be evacuated. The initial impact of the storm destroyed homes and businesses and the city's levees collapsed, leading to devastating flooding which covered around 80 per cent of New Orleans. Over a thousand people died in the city as a result of the hurricane.

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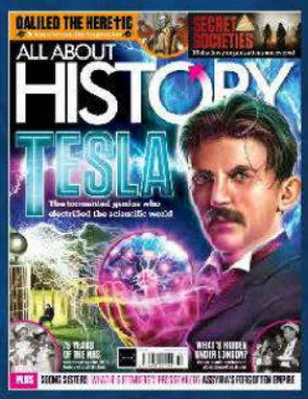

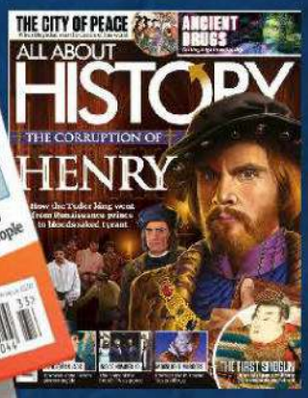

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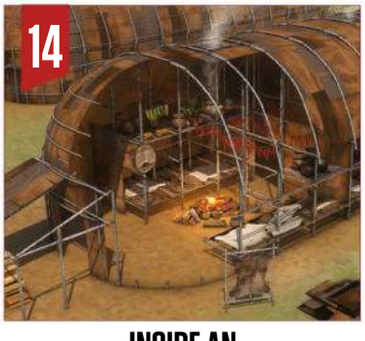
ALL ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS

We explore the wide expanse of indigenous history in North America, from its pre-colonial years to the modern era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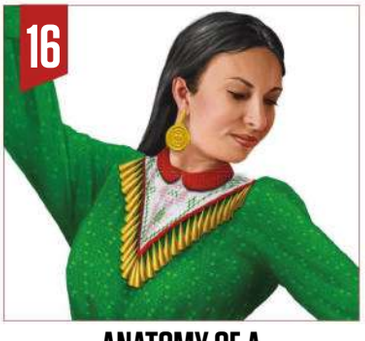
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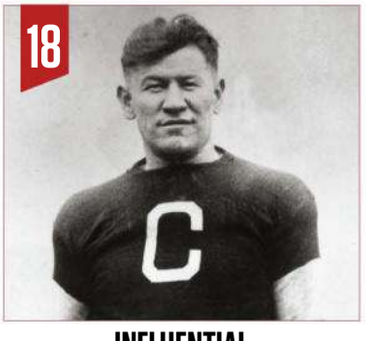
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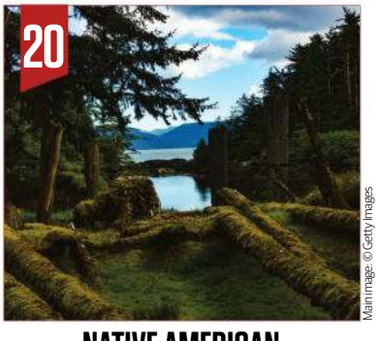
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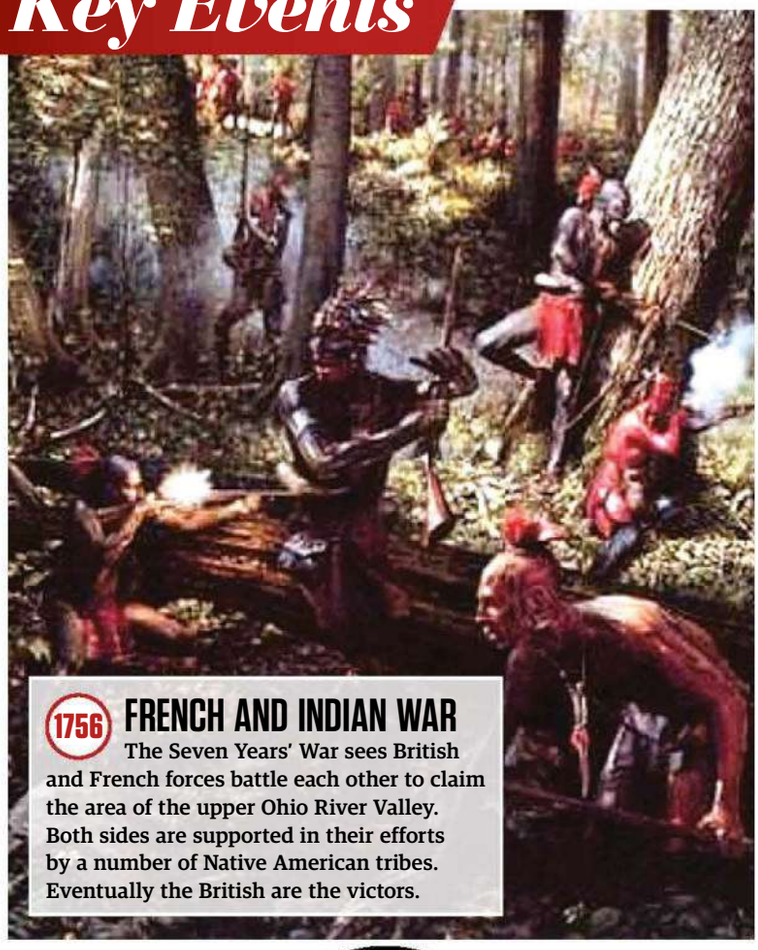
Main image: © Getty Images

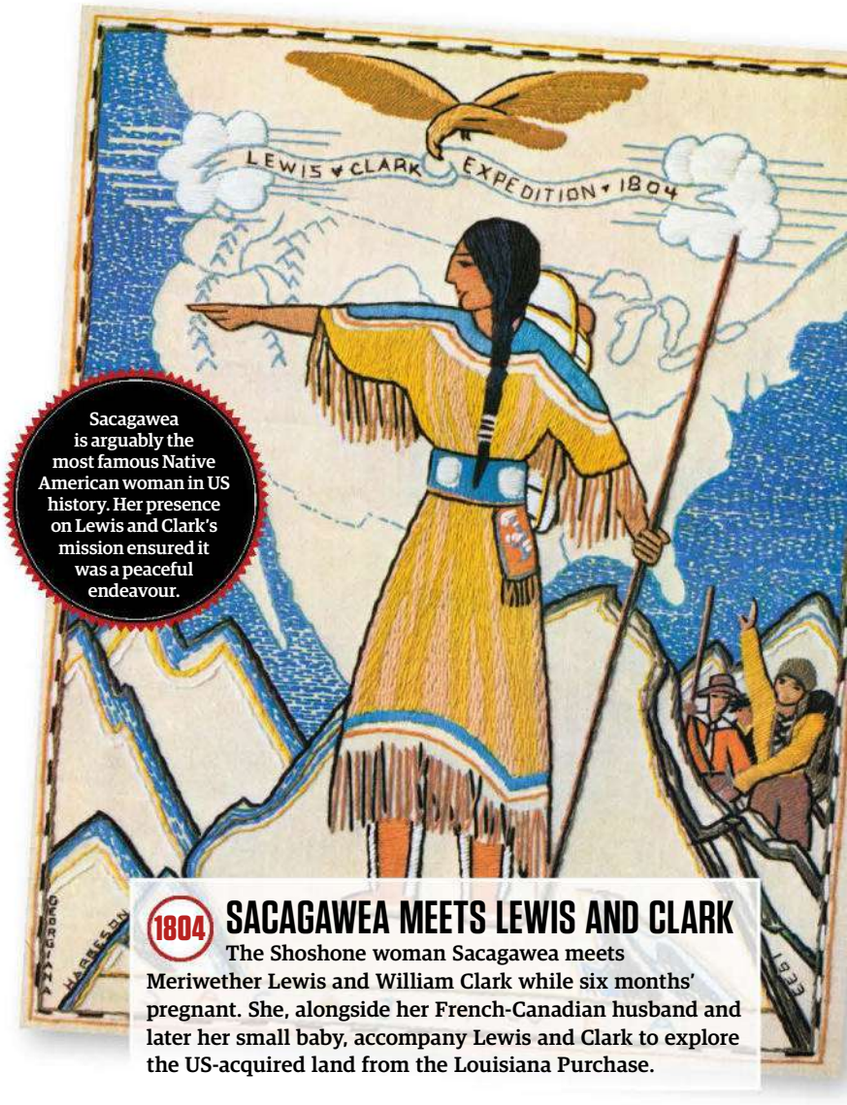
Written by Callum McKelvie, Emily Staniforth, Jonathan Gordon

Key Events



1756 FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

The Seven Years' War sees British and French forces battle each other to claim the area of the upper Ohio River Valley. Both sides are supported in their efforts by a number of Native American tribes. Eventually the British are the victors.



Sacagawea is arguably the most famous Native American woman in US history. Her presence on Lewis and Clark's mission ensured it was a peaceful endeavour.

1804 SACAGAWEA MEETS LEWIS AND CLARK

The Shoshone woman Sacagawea meets Meriwether Lewis and William Clark while six months' pregnant. She, alongside her French-Canadian husband and later her small baby, accompany Lewis and Clark to explore the US-acquired land from the Louisiana Purchase.

ARCHAIC PERIOD
c.6000 BCE - c.500 CE

Indigenous people of the Archaic culture differ from their predecessors by living in larger groups with a less nomadic lifestyle and a more varied diet.

MISSISSIPPIAN CULTURE
c.1000 - c.1500

Mississippian culture, which originates in the Mississippi River Valley, sees further developments in agricultural cultivation and political and cultural systems among indigenous groups.

POCAHONTAS ENCOUNTERS JOHN SMITH 1607

Captain John Smith is kidnapped from the Jamestown Colony by men of the Powhatan Confederacy. Smith's life is allegedly saved by Chief Powhatan's daughter, Pocahontas.

c.16000 BCE

WOODLAND PERIOD
c.1000 BCE - c.1000 CE

The Woodland Period archaeological era begins in eastern North America. It is characterised by the development of horticultural activities, mound construction and ceramic manufacturing.

1492

SPANISH CONTACT IN THE SOUTHWEST 1539

Hernando de Soto, a Spanish explorer and conquistador, lands in Florida. He captures Native Americans who he uses as guides as he travels through America.

DISEASE IN NEW ENGLAND 1616

An epidemic, possibly of smallpox, sweeps across New England decimating the Native American communities. Around 90 per cent of the Massachusetts tribe die from disease.

c.16000 BCE

THE FIRST NATIVE AMERICANS

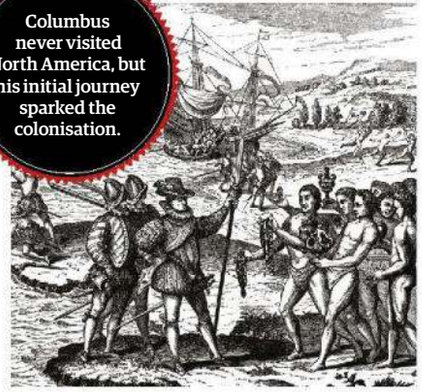
Early migrants use a bridge over the Bering Strait to migrate from Siberia to Alaska at the end of the last Ice Age. They are hunter gatherers who become the first humans in North America according to archaeological evidence.

1492

COLUMBUS ARRIVES IN THE AMERICAS

Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus lands in the Bahamas. Believing he has reached the Indies, he calls the island's inhabitants "Indians". He establishes a small colony on the island and takes captured native people back to Spain on his return voyage.

Columbus never visited North America, but his initial journey sparked the colonisation.



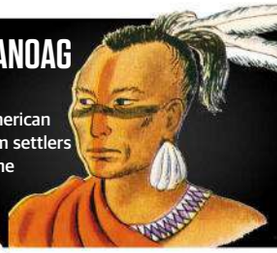
The Ghost Dance movement saw Native Americans, who believed they were being moved to reservations as punishment for abandoning their traditional ways, try to reconnect with their customs through the Ghost Dance.

1890 WOUNDED KNEE MASSACRE

Approximately 150 Native Americans are killed by the US cavalry near Wounded Knee Creek. The cavalry surround Ghost Dancers, whose Lakota Sioux Chief is Big Foot, and a fight allegedly breaks out. The ensuing massacre sees many women and children killed.

THE PILGRIM-WAMPANOAG PEACE TREATY 1621

An English-speaking Native American known as Squanto helps Pilgrim settlers establish a peace treaty with the Wampanoag Confederacy. The treaty is the first of its kind.

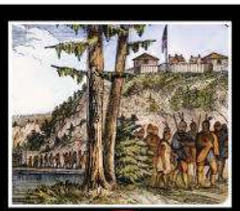


OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS 1824

The establishment of the Office of Indian Affairs by the US government sets out the government's aim to defeat native tribes and relocate them to reservations.

TRAIL OF TEARS 1838

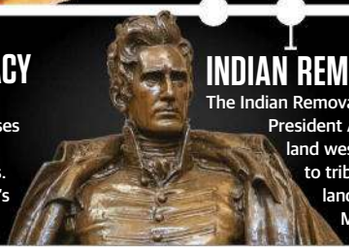
An estimated 4,000 members of the Cherokee nation, nearly a fifth of their population, die as they are forced to move westwards by the government.



1756 — 1804 — 1876 — 1890 — 1924

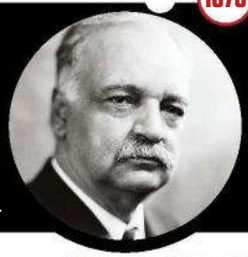
TECUMSEH CONFEDERACY 1810

Shawnee Chief Tecumseh organises a confederacy of tribes in the northwest to resist white settlers. They face US forces in Tecumseh's War and the War of 1812.



INDIAN REMOVAL ACT 1830

The Indian Removal Act is signed by President Andrew Jackson. It gives land west of the Mississippi River to tribes in exchange for their land within the state borders. Many tribes resist relocation.



FIRST NATIVE AMERICAN SENATOR 1907

Charles Curtis becomes the first senator with Native American heritage. He is an enrolled member of the Kaw Nation who later becomes Vice President.

1876 BATTLE OF THE LITTLE BIGHORN

Federal troops are overwhelmed by the Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne warriors, led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, that face them in battle. The tribes had been resisting encroachment on their lands after gold had been found in their region.

1924 INDIAN CITIZENSHIP ACT

President Calvin Coolidge enacts the Indian Citizenship Act, which declares that all Native Americans born in the country (around 300,000 at the time) are official citizens. However, the Act does not establish that all Native Americans are afforded voting rights.

All images: ©Alamy, © Getty Images

IROQUOIS LONGHOUSE

Northeast America and Upstate New York
c.18th century

The Iroquois is the name used to refer to indigenous American tribes that speak an Iroquoian language. These tribes included Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. They primarily occupied areas around what is now New York and sections of Pennsylvania. The Iroquois peoples confederation is also known as the Haudenosaunee which means 'People of the Longhouse'. According to the Haudenosaunee's official site, the longhouse imagery was symbolic of each nation's role within the confederacy.

Longhouses were the homes of the Iroquois and would house a number of families. Longhouses have been built in a variety of different cultures, evidence of the earliest examples being found in Europe and originating from around 5000 BCE. Even the Vikings of Scandinavia are said to have lived in variations of the form. Other indigenous peoples of North America, including those living on the coast of the Pacific Northwest, lived in such structures, though these varied in design and construction to those built by the Iroquois.

The name is an obvious reference to the long shape of these homes, usually dictated by the size and number of the families who were to live in them. An Iroquois village would have comprised of a number of longhouses and would have been surrounded by a palisade, a protective wall constructed out of wooden posts and bark.

A great deal of what was originally known about these constructions and their use came from white European colonists and settlers. However, in recent years archaeologists in the New York area have uncovered evidence of traditional longhouses, helping further our understanding of these important structures.

While longhouses are mostly no longer used as living quarters, they remain an important part of Iroquois culture. They are still constructed using traditional methods and in some cases they are used as gathering places for important tribe meetings, or for ritual use.

Inside the interior of a traditional Iroquois longhouse

STORAGE SHED
Each entrance to the longhouse had a shed or porch area that could be used for storage. A description of these porches from 1724 by Father Joseph-Francois Lafitau explains that during the winter months, bark was used to cover the porch area so that wood for the fire can be stored without getting damp.

STORAGE AREAS
Above and beneath the raised platforms would be areas designated for storage. Underneath the bench would be used to store large amounts of wood for the fires. Above the bench would be another storage area, which would also serve to cover the bench when sleeping.

DOORS
The majority of longhouses had two doors, one at each end of the building and corresponding to east and west. According to Elisabeth Tooker in her book, *The Iroquois Ceremonial Of Midwinter*, men usually sit in one of the longhouses and women and children in the other and use the corresponding doors. However, sometimes seating is organised by moiety (groups) and they enter this way.

FIRE
Each longhouse would most likely have had a number of fires within it. These fires would have been used for cooking and heating purposes and one fire would have been shared by two families. Gaps in the roof stopped the smoke from filling the longhouse.

PERSONAL ITEMS

The belongings of the Iroquois, items including animal skins and cooking pots, would most likely be kept on the shelves above the platforms. The Iroquois made many items, weaving baskets and reed mats. Spare animal skins and rugs would be kept, ready for use in the cold winter months. Other items would be hung on the walls and sacks of food and braids of corn were hung from the ceilings.

ROUNDED ROOF

The roofs of longhouses were almost always 20 feet high. Curved, they would be constructed out of saplings and then covered in sheets of elm bark. This proved to be an efficient way of insulating the longhouse and keeping in the heat. Holes were made in the roof in order to let out the smoke from the fires and also to provide some lighting.

HOW LONG IS A LONGHOUSE?

Longhouses varied in length but according to the New York State Museum they could be anywhere between 30 and hundreds of feet long. The longhouses built by the Iroquois were normally between 180 and 220 feet, though some examples are believed to have existed that were 400. However they were almost always 20 feet wide.

FAMILY COMPARTMENTS

According to the New York State Museum, each longhouse would be divided into compartments that were around 20 feet long in size. These compartments would be the living quarters for the families in residence and each compartment would be shared between two families. These compartments were located on opposite sides of the main aisle and communal area.

An Ojibwe family inside a similar style of longhouse

PLATFORMS

Inside each compartment were raised platforms. These were roughly a foot from the ground and would be covered in a variety of rugs and blankets. According to the New York State Museum this gave the appearance of being like benches. On these platforms the family members would perform numerous activities including some work, sleep and have conversations.

LONGHOUSE CONSTRUCTION

Longhouses were built out of huge wooden posts that were used to make the frame. These were made out of saplings. The frame would then be covered with sheets of bark that would help insulate the longhouse during the winter. The saplings were tied together at the top, thus creating the domed roof.

Illustration by Adam Mann
Inset images © Alamy

Anatomy

JINGLE DRESS

United States
c.1900s

FLAT FAN

Traditionally, jingle dancers had no accessories. Although some sources state that they could occasionally carry a hand purse, even then this was not a necessity. However, as the dance has evolved some jingle dancers now carry a flat fan, which are created by placing individual feathers to either a handle or a bird's wing.

MATERIAL

Traditionally the dress itself was made out of animal hides. Lori Henry in *Dancing Through History* meets a dancer whose dress is constructed out of traditional porcupine quill. Some contemporary dresses are made out of polyester, however all are made using bright colours. Underneath the dress the dancer wears a pair of leggings.

ORIGINS OF THE JINGLE DRESS

Jingle dresses are worn by indigenous women when performing the historical jingle dance. The dance is said to have begun in the lands of the Anishinaabe and is considered to be a healing dance. It first originated around the turn of the 20th century. The dance quickly spread and became popular among many Indigenous American tribes.

BELT

Traditional jingle dancers wear a conch or beaded belt around their waist. Concho belts (coming from the Spanish word for shell) are made to resemble rounded silver discs. Some of the first of these belts were made out of melted down silver dollars and were then moulded to create shell-like shapes.

ZIIBAASKA'IGANAN

The dress is covered in hundreds of minute metal cones known as ziibaaska'iganan. It is these cones that give the dress the distinctive 'jingle' sound from which it takes its name. Traditionally they are made out of rolling cut snuff can lids. Due to this, jingle dresses can be extremely heavy.

LEGEND OF THE JINGLE DRESS

There is a legend attached to the jingle dress. The story goes that a medicine man had a series of dreams in which four women appeared to him and taught him the dance and how to make the dress. In some versions, the man's granddaughter was ill and he was instructed to make the dress to cure her.

MOCCASIN

Moccasins are a traditional form of Native American footwear. The shoe is constructed out of a single piece of animal hide (usually buckskin), which is then sewn at the top. They are decorated with silk, coloured cloth and glass beads. In winter time, they were sometimes stuffed with grass in order to keep the feet warm. Now they are still worn by the jingle dancers.

Illustration by Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

HIILILI KOKKO: KATSINA FIGURE

This distinctive wooden figure represents a spiritual being, important to the folklore of the Hopi tribe

USA, c.1900

This striking wooden doll is one of a number of Katsina dolls currently in the possession of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. These dolls demonstrate the craftsmanship of the members of the Hopi tribe, but their importance goes beyond mere aesthetics. Katsina dolls are spiritually and culturally significant and can tell us a great deal about the folklore of the Pueblo indigenous peoples.

The word Katsina (sometimes Kachina) refers to a race of supernatural beings in folklore. These beings come in many forms and are said to represent anything from animals, to crops, to the weather. The latter are stated to have magical powers that also allow them to control the weather, including influencing the rain – all important to agricultural peoples. Through the half of the year that they visit the tribes they assist in many things, including punishing those who have broken religious or societal laws and taboos. And during the months that the Katsina are present, they also act as a bridge with the spirit world and communication with the hereafter.

The Katsina are represented by wooden figures or dolls. These were given to the young children of the tribe but they were not intended as toys, rather they were to help teach the children about the importance of the Katsina. This particular example was made by a member of the Hopi tribe.

The oldest example of a Katsina doll dates to the 18th century. As well as figures, dancers wearing carved masks also represent Katsina at various ceremonies. The Hopi tribe are not alone in creating these figures either and Katsina dolls are also produced by the Zuni and other tribes. In the following century, travellers became increasingly interested in indigenous American art. As such, tribes started to produce the figures for the explicit purpose of selling them to tourists.

PAINT

For Katsina figures of this period, vegetable pigments were used in order to provide the distinct paintwork. However, on some examples the paint has faded over time as they were not water resistant. Usually this did not matter as the figures were designed to be hung on walls.

COTTONWOOD

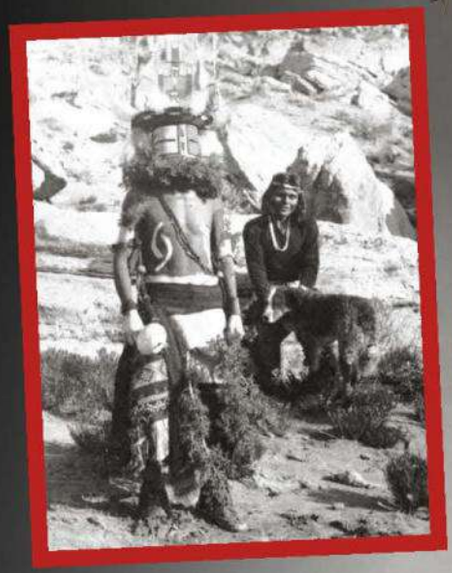
Katsina doll making has four distinct phases with this example most likely belonging to the earliest. Dolls of the Early Traditional period were carved from only a single piece of cottonwood. A sandstone would be used to smooth the wood.

MODERN KATSINA DOLLS

Contemporary Katsina dolls have a few notable figures that make them substantially different to the example shown here. Firstly, they feature movement whereas older examples were always static. The use of eagle feathers in their construction was banned and instead the feathers were carved rather than glued on.

MATERIALS

The figure is constructed from cottonwood, metal, vegetal fibre, cloth and wool yarn. Feathers have been used to decorate the Katsina, as well as horsehair. The Katsina figure is larger than it appears in this image, being 46cm tall.

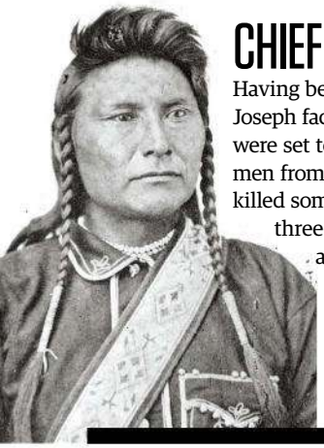


LEFT
A dancer wearing a costume of one of the many Kachina

All images © Getty Images, © Metropolitan Museum of Art

INFLUENTIAL NATIVE AMERICANS

Men and women who defended, inspired and led their people across the centuries



CHIEF JOSEPH NEZ PERCE, C. 1840 – 1904

Having been forced out of their ancestral home, Chief Joseph faced misfortune head-on. Just as his people were set to relocate to Idaho from Oregon, three men from a fellow chief's group attacked and killed some white settlers. What followed was a three-month trek of nearly 300 people to try and reach Canada, fighting battles along the way, but endearing himself to local people. Chief Joseph ultimately surrendered, but continued to advocate for his people, including a personal meeting with President Theodore Roosevelt.

EDMONIA LEWIS OJIBWA, 1844 – 1907

Raised in the Ojibwa community of her mother, Lewis was of Native American and African American descent and became the first person of either lineage to gain international recognition as a sculptor. Having moved to Rome in 1865, she did her own stonework rather than hiring locals to adapt her plaster model (as was common) so there could be no question over her authorship of the works. Her depictions of Native American life in marble are particularly noteworthy.

Tamanend III
Lenape, c.1625 – 1701

We have few official records or information about the background of Tamanend, known as 'the affable', but his legend has gone down in history. Meeting Quaker William Penn in 1682, Tamanend and Penn signed a landmark treaty of peace and friendship. The Treaty of Shackamaxon (named after the town in which Tamanend lived) established Penn's foothold in what is now Pennsylvania. Tamanend, often referred to as Tammany by the colonists, became a folk hero during the Revolutionary War and was called the Patron Saint of America. His reputation for wisdom, hospitality and virtue has lived on through the decades.

The Tammany Hall group that dominated New York politics for over 100 years was named after Tamanend.

Sacagawea
Shoshone, 1788 – 1812

Like many American figures, some of Sacagawea's life may be more legend than history, but some details remain clear. Born in the Lemhi Shoshone community, she was captured and enslaved at 12 to the Hidatsa and sold to a French trader aged 16, becoming one of his wives. When Meriwether Lewis and William Clark hired her husband as an interpreter for their expedition, Sacagawea, having only given birth a few months earlier, joined the expedition as the only one who could communicate with the Shoshones. She was an integral part of their journey's survival and success, travelling from the Dakotas to the Pacific Northwest, all the while carrying her infant son.

Sacagawea's presence on the expedition with a child was a signal her companions were not a threat to other tribes.

TECUMSEH SHAWNEE, 1768 – 1813

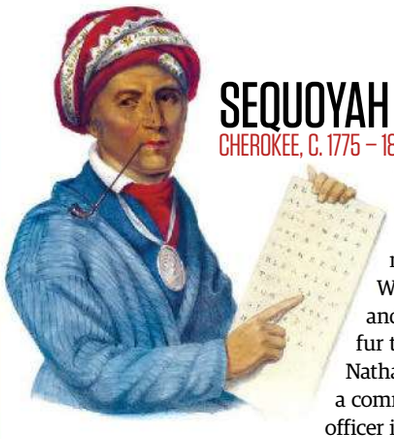
Raised to hate white Americans, having lost his father to them and seeing his home invaded and crops destroyed over the years, Tecumseh joined the British cause aged 14 during the Revolutionary War. Following the war he continued to engage in actions against white Americans, but was also growing into a leader and orator who advocated traditional Native American values, such as communal ownership. He died fighting alongside the British again in the War of 1812.

Tecumseh.

Sitting Bull
Lakota, c.1831 – 1890

Rising up to become the principal chief of the entire Sioux nation in 1867, Sitting Bull had established his reputation among his people as a proud and fearless leader. He joined his first war party at 14 and was part of the Strong Heart and Silent Eater groups defending Native American welfare. It was his battles with the US government that gained him fame, however, with the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876 being his most famous victory. While he won battles, he lost the war and was forced to retreat to Canada for a while, returning to surrender in 1881. From 1885 he joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, travelling the world.

Sitting Bull was killed during an arrest over fears of a growing Ghost Dance resistance movement.



SEQUOYAH
CHEROKEE, C. 1775 – 1843

The son of a Cherokee woman named Wuh-teh and possibly fur trader Nathaniel Gist, a commissioned officer in the Continental army, Sequoyah grew up only speaking Cherokee and retaining the customs of his people. However, he believed that written language was a strength of the colonisers worth adapting for his own people. He developed a written Cherokee language of 86 symbols for the syllables of the spoken language, giving birth to books, newspapers and more in Cherokee.

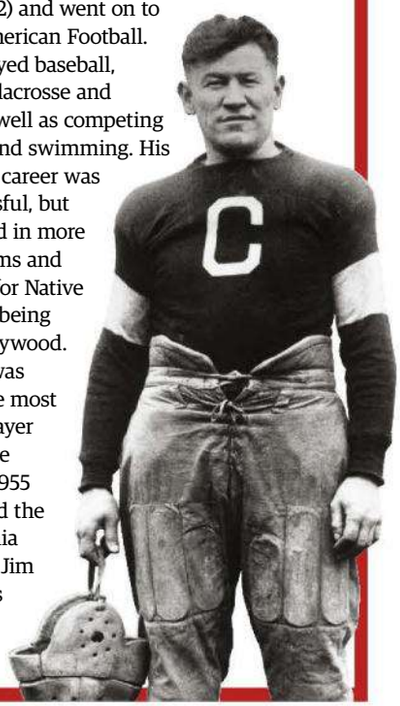
Susan La Flesche Picotte
Ponca, 1865 – 1915

Born in northeastern Nebraska to a chief, Dr La Flesche Picotte's calling in medicine began when she was a child and saw a Native American woman die due to lack of care by white physicians. She committed herself to providing that care in the future and was the first Native American to receive a medical degree, graduating at the top of her class. She returned to Nebraska to work at a government boarding school and then set up her own practice from 1894 where she cared for all patients in the area. She also opened a hospital in the reservation town, Walthill, which today stands as a museum to her work.

As well as being a doctor, La Flesche Picotte was heavily involved in the temperance movement.

Jim Thorpe
Sauk and Fox, 1888 – 1953

One of the most versatile and accomplished athletes of the early 20th century, Thorpe's legacy as a popular figure is quite remarkable. He competed at the Stockholm Olympics in 1912, winning the decathlon and pentathlon (medals he was stripped of for competing semi-professionally, but fully restored to him in 2022) and went on to excel in American Football. He also played baseball, basketball, lacrosse and hockey, as well as competing in boxing and swimming. His post-sports career was less successful, but he appeared in more than 60 films and advocated for Native Americans being cast in Hollywood. His name was given to the most valuable player award of the NFL from 1955 to 2008 and the Pennsylvania borough of Jim Thorpe was created in 1954.



MARIA TALLCHIEF
OSAGE, 1925 – 2013

Tallchief rose from her birthplace of Fairfax, Oklahoma to become one of the only American dancers to be recognised as a prima ballerina. She started out in New York working with (and later marrying) choreographer George Balanchine, but was also the first American to dance with the Paris Opera Ballet and at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. Retiring in 1965, she opened her own school with her sister (a fellow dancer) and advocated for Native American rights.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

Q&A

EXPLORING INDIGENOUS RESURGENCE

Taiaiake Alfred guides us through the importance of the revitalisation of Canada's First Nations culture

What forms has the dispossession of First Nations in North America taken throughout history?

The relationship between the Original People of this continent and the newcomers has been shaped from the start by Europeans' and later Euroamericans' insatiable greed for our land, and their unceasing efforts to gain possession of our resources and to erase us politically. We have always been an obstacle to European ambitions and demonised in colonial mythology. Our peoples' struggle has been to maintain ourselves, to survive the violence and legal machinations of the White Man in our homelands.

The first stage of this history was defined by treaty-making on a nation-to-nation basis, which was a necessity on the part of Europeans because of our numerical superiority. But as soon as the impacts of epidemics of disease took their toll on our people, and reduced our numbers drastically, North American history became a story of broken promises, naked aggression, legal fiction and forced acculturation with the aim of eliminating First Nations as obstacles to the expansion of Empire.

The forms of dispossession included disregard and legal reinterpretation of treaty commitments, outlawing of First Nations' rights, governmental supports for outright theft by White settlers, physical removals of communities and nations and later, forced removal of generations of First Nations children from their families and communities and placement in so-called residential schools run by churches with the intent of deculturing them and assimilating them into mainstream society.

In what ways have First Nations historically resisted land and cultural dispossession?

When Europeans first set foot in North America there were around 500 nations of people occupying the continent – distinct linguistic, cultural and political collectivities. Now there are only around 50; the vast majority of the original people of North America were wiped out by diseases brought by Europeans and by war. The ways First Nations have resisted include the obvious, military force from the start through to the 19th century – and this is not a historical fact only, because as late as 1990 there was a sustained armed conflict between the armed forces of Canada and my own nation. But beyond physical resistance, First Nations have organised and advocated in the courts for their rights since the 1970s and this has been effective in preserving the bare essence of the reality of a treaty-based nation-to-nation relationship between First Nations and Canada and the United States governments. In recent decades, as our existence has felt less threatened than in previous eras, our people have turned to restoring and revitalising our cultures, focusing on reinvigorating our

Taiaiake Alfred is a Kahnawà:ke Mohawk author and educator. He established the Concordia University's Centre for Native Education and the University of Victoria's Indigenous Governance Program, and has worked for over three decades in First Nations governance.

BELOW Abandoned longhouses at SGang Gwaay in British Columbia

Photo courtesy of: Ashley Seymour

languages and ceremonies and our land-based cultural practices.

What was the impact of the attempted 'assimilation' of First Nations' people in North America?

First Nations people have been severely impacted physically and psychologically. In all First Nations, the impacts of the multi-generational trauma of colonialism and Settler racism are profound and manifest in many ways. Our people, sadly, have social pathology, incarceration, and disease rates, just to name three measures for example, that far outpace the mainstream population and affect every one of our families. But most profoundly, the multi-pronged assault on our people over generations has created a social reality in our communities that could be best understood in a Fanonian sense of a colonised mentality – it has disconnected our people from the source of their identity – their lands – and fomented divisions, cultural confusion and undermined people's trust in themselves and their Indigenous institutions.

Over the last few generations, how have First Nations people been reclaiming their heritage and revitalising their identities and cultures?

It's been a monumental effort on the part of our people to simply survive the Euroamerican governments' attempt to eliminate us. Those of us that are still here are the inheritors of a heritage of resistance and courageous, wise choices on the part of our ancestors. We are the survivors of a genocide and while this history has scarred us, it has also made us resilient. Our ancestors knew that aside from fighting like hell, not trusting the White Man and not allowing one more inch of our lands to be stolen by force, decree or fraud, preserving our identities and connections to our homelands was the key to survival and ensuring that our future generations would know themselves and live as Onkwehonwe, original people, and the key to this was the preservation of our languages and spirituality. We have adapted many forms of technology to restore languages, and expanded the ways we practise and share our culture in recent years, especially in the arts and contemporary forms of music.

Why is the Indigenous Resurgence movement important to First Nations?

I think that framing our resistance as Indigenous Resurgence, which is an idea that focuses on the restoration and adaptation of ancestral identities and practices and direct action to get our land back, is the key to our survival in the long term. We cannot exist into the future without a meaningful connection to the unique heritage that defines us as nations, and without a real relationship to the natural world and the landscapes and sacred places that are essential to our being Onkwehonweneha and the birthright of our future generations. The idea of Indigenous Resurgence, as an intellectual paradigm and political movement, strategises these imperatives. It's the only effective alternative to assimilation and integration into the agenda of the North American states.

ABOVE
Dancers at a Kahnawà:ke cultural event in Quebec

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LAND: COLLECTED TALKS AND INTERVIEWS ON INDIGENOUS RESURGENCE (UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS, 2023) BY TAIAIAKE ALFRED IS ON SALE FROM 12 SEPTEMBER 2023.

All images © Alamy

INDIGENOUS HISTORICAL SITES

From ancient mounds to cliff dwellings, five Native American locations worth visiting

1 KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

NORTH DAKOTA

Located in North Dakota, Knife River historical site allows visitors to explore the remains of several indigenous settlements. In particular there can be seen the remains of two villages belonging to the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes. These tribes built vast settlements of earth lodges, the largest of which (according to the National Park Service) comprised 120 of these dwellings. However, in 1837 both of these villages were all but wiped out by a deadly outbreak of smallpox.

As well as archaeological remnants, the site also includes a reconstructed earth lodge. Indigenous tribes in this area built these dwellings and according to the National Park Service, they could house up to 20 people. These structures were built by first constructing a central wooden frame and then covering it in branches, dried grass and grass-covered mud. This gave the structure the appearance of a small hillock. Interestingly, the building of the earth lodge would have been largely overseen by the women of the tribe.

Opening hours vary between 8am and 5pm, depending on the season. Admission is free.

The Knife River site contains the remains of two indigenous villages

The reconstructed earth lodge at the Knife River site

2 LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT

MONTANA

Last Stand Hill at the site of the Battle of the Little Bighorn

On 25 and 26 June 1876, the Battle of the Little Bighorn took place between the United States army led by General Custer, and Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne warriors. For some time, indigenous peoples were being forced off their lands and onto reservations, motivated partially by the discovery of gold in these areas and also a desire for further expansion. When the Sioux and Cheyenne did not relocate as instructed, Custer and his troops were sent to confront them. However, their relatively small force was quickly outnumbered and Custer and his men were massacred in the battle.

Now the site has a centre where visitors can learn about the history of the battle as well as a number of historical artefacts. Also on the site is the Custer memorial cemetery and a memorial at Last Stand hill. Close by and also of significance is the Reno-Benteen Battlefield that can be reached as part of a self-guided 4.5-mile tour.

Opening hours vary between 8am and 6pm, depending on the season. Entrance passes vary between $15 and $25.

90 feet above the valley floor, the 'castle' is an awesome sight

The mysterious Montezuma Well, located nearby

3 MONTEZUMA CASTLE
ARIZONA

Montezuma is one of the best preserved examples of Native American Pueblo. Located in the cliffs of the Verde Valley in Central Arizona, the name is a misnomer. Early European settlers who first discovered the site believed that it was Aztec in origin and as a result named it after the famous Aztec emperor. In fact, the site is attributed to the Sinagua, an indigenous people who were active in the Arizona area between the 6th and 15th centuries. They were agricultural farming peoples who lived in the desert and grew crops such as squash and beans.

Montezuma Castle is built into the side of a limestone cliff, roughly 90 feet above the ground. The monument is five stories high and contains 20 rooms. Due to the disintegration of the limestone, visitors are unfortunately no longer allowed inside in order to better preserve the historical site.

The site was designated a national monument in 1906, one of a number chosen by Theodore Roosevelt himself. 11 miles north of the structure is another sight of historical interest, Montezuma Well. A natural limestone sinkhole, the well is replenished with 5.7 million litres of new water on a daily basis. Evidence of Sinagua structures built in the cliffs nearby show that they would have used the site to provide themselves with fresh water.

Opening hours are 8am to 4.45pm, seven days a week. Admission is $10.

An example of one of the mounds at the site

4 OCMULGEE MOUNDS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
MACON, GEORGIA

Ocmulgee National Park is famous for a number of indigenous mounds located on the site. These were built between 900 and 1100 CE and the village here was once thought to have been home to nearly a thousand people. Although some were used for burial purposes, not all were. According to National Geographic, the tallest mound would have been home to the Chief's residence.

Far later during the 18th century, the site was the home of the Muscogee Nation. During the next century the Central of Georgia Railroad ran directly through the site and in the process many of the ancient graves were desecrated and displaced in a horrifying act that showed little respect for the history of the indigenous persons.

The Ocmulgee mounds are of great historical and cultural importance. Archaeological digs at the site have uncovered a wealth of historical treasures and artefacts. The mounds' significance to the history of the indigenous persons in the area cannot be overstated and they are some of the most astounding examples.

The site is open 8am to 5pm seven days a week, with the visitor centre open from 9am. Free admission.

5 MESA VERDE
COLORADO

Located in Colorado, the Mesa Verde National Park contains a fabulous number of indigenous American ruins built out of sandstone and clay, the most famous of which has been nicknamed the 'cliff palace'. The largest cliff dwelling in North America contains some of the most breathtaking examples of indigenous American architecture throughout its more than 150 rooms.

Over the years Mesa Verde became the target of treasure seekers and vandals who took what they considered to be of any monetary value, causing vast amounts of damage to the site in the process. The Mesa Verde structures are thought to have been abandoned in the 1300s, roughly a hundred years after they were first built. Why they were abandoned is something of a mystery with theories stretching from a sudden scarcity of resources to attack by enemy tribes (though little evidence exists to support this). The Pueblo people did not vanish however and are suspected to have migrated south where their descendants live to this day.

Like Montezuma Castle, the site was one of those chosen by Theodore Roosevelt to become a national monument in 1906. Unlike other sites, visitors can enter the cliff dwellings and explore this unique site, though they are required to be on a ticketed tour with a park ranger.

The park is open 24 hours, however tours and trails operate at specific times. Admission varies between $15 and $30.

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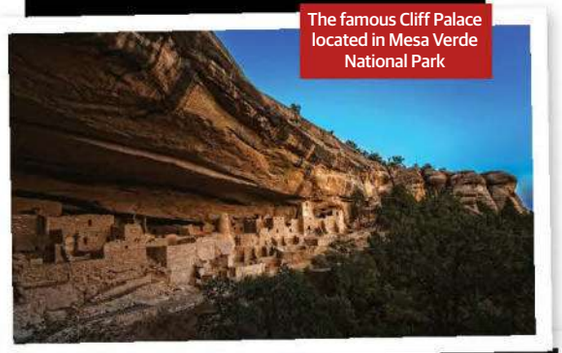
The famous Cliff Palace located in Mesa Verde National Park

Lit at night by lantern light, Mesa Verde is an awesome sight

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Rise of the MONGOLS

How Genghis Khan forged an empire that sought to span the world

Written by John Man

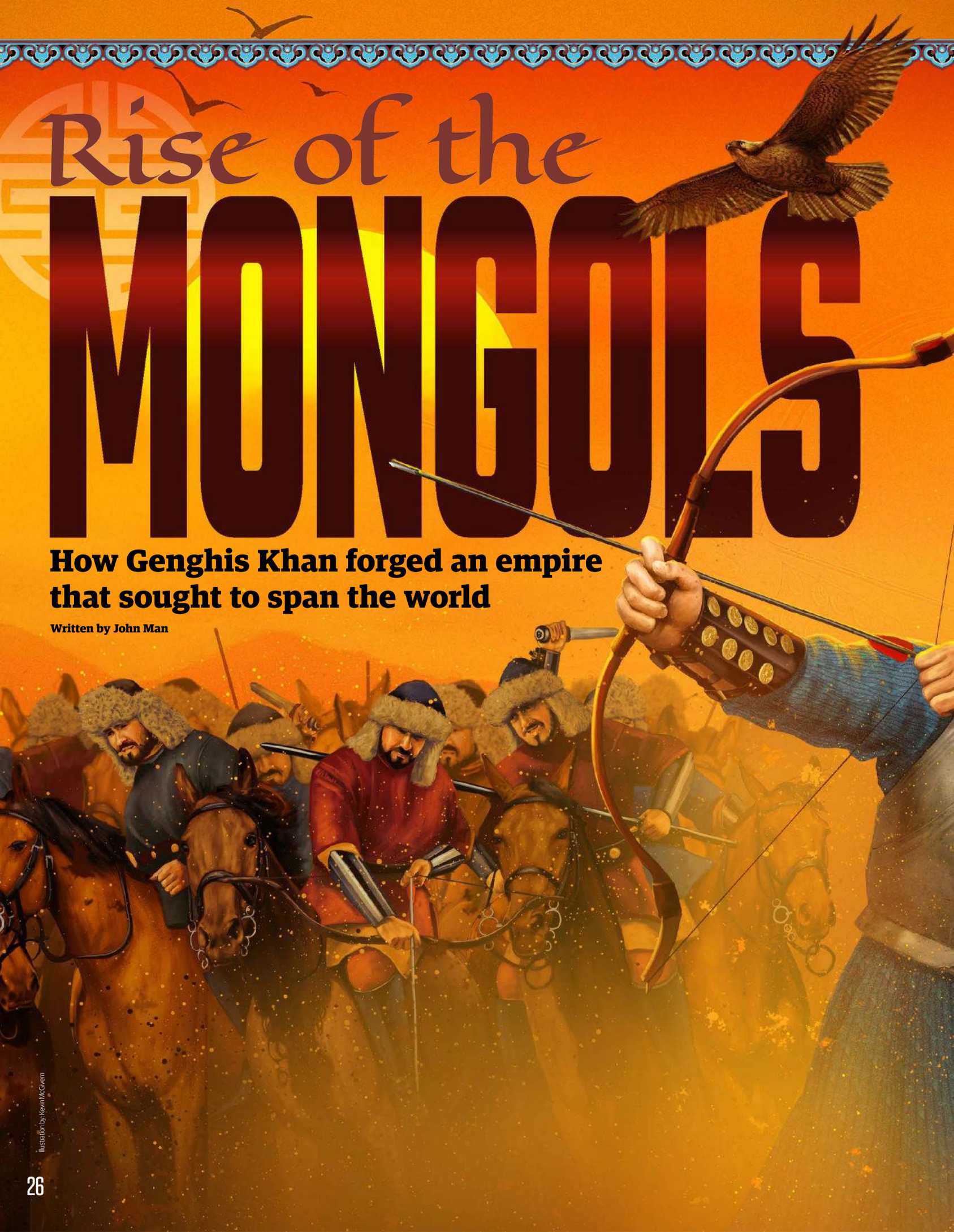

Illustration by Kevin McGivern

EXPERT BIO

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JOHN MAN

John Man is the author of several books on the Mongol Empire. *Genghis Khan: Life, Death And Resurrection* is a bestseller in 21 languages. He has just translated *The Mongol Khan*, a Mongolian spectacular opening in London's Coliseum in November 2023.

The Mongols, under the brilliant, ruthless leadership of Genghis Khan, founded the world's biggest land empire. So you would assume the Mongols originated in Mongolia. Well, no. Long before Genghis rose to power, they were immigrants, moving westward from lands beyond the borders of the nation named after them.

Their foundation epic, the *Secret History Of The Mongols*, written soon after Genghis's death, says they came to their current homeland over a, or the, 'Tengis' – meaning a sea or lake – some three or four centuries before Genghis was born in 1162. What an academic storm that word has produced. Which body of water does the word 'Tengis' refer to? Perhaps the Caspian or Aral? Unlikely, because that would mean that the Mongols came from the far west. Or possibly, as some scholars argue, Lake Baikal in Siberia, where the Buryat Mongols live to this day. More likely, this Tengis was the only other large body of water in this part of the world – Lake Hulun, in north-east China.

"Genghis's mother instilled in her son crucial skills in survival and leadership"

The evidence is slight, but enough to construct a narrative:

Some 1,500 years ago, according to Chinese records, forest people known as Shiwei dominated the forests of the north-east, in present-day Manchuria. They lived in huts made of bent branches covered by the skins of the animals they hunted. They paid tributes in furs to the Turkic empire that ruled Mongolia in the 6th century (long before the Turks started to migrate westward to Turkey) and to the Tang in China from the 7th to the 9th centuries. They were divided into up to 20 clans, one of which lived in the western part of their range, the Xingan mountains, and was referred to as Meng-wu, the Chinese for Mongol.

Records say they moved west on to the grasslands of northern China, learned the art of working iron, and settled along the river Ergun (in one of several spellings), now part of the frontier between China and Russia. The name of the river suggests that this may be true: it probably derives from the Mongol *ergikh*, to wind or twist, which is something the Ergun does a good deal as it meanders northwards for 1,000 kilometres, to join the Amur.

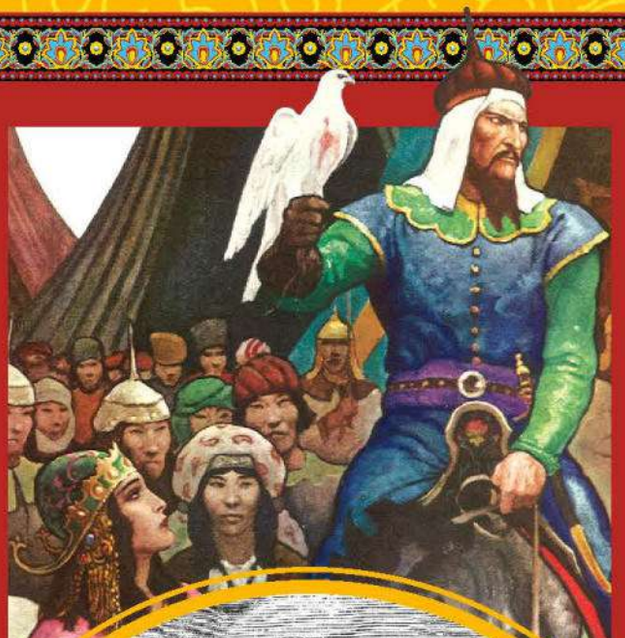
Near the little town of Shiwei, its name recalling the long-vanished tribe, is an arch marking the entrance to a park proclaiming itself to be the Origin of the Mongols. Bronze statues represent scenes from the Mongols' later history. Here, according to a local legend, there was a battle between the Mongols and the Turks. The Mongols were reduced to two couples, who fled into an enclosed valley in a range of mountains. Here the Mongols multiplied and lived for four or five centuries.

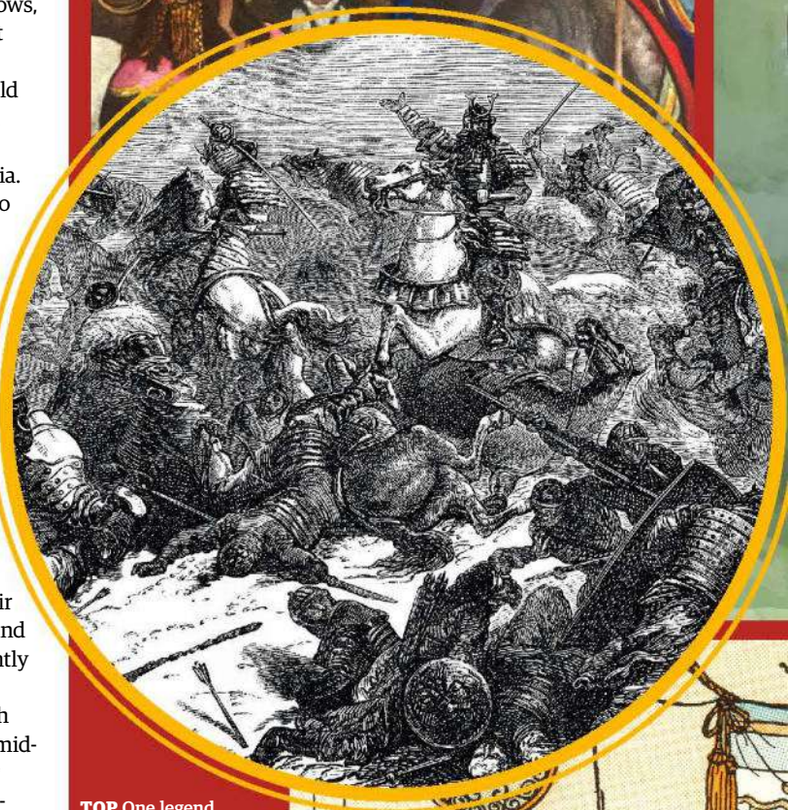
There came a time when they desired to escape. The legend relates how they killed 70 oxen and cows, and used the hides to make enormous bellows. With the bellows, they made a huge fire, so powerful that it melted part of the mountain range, making a cleft through which they could escape the hidden valley. They crossed the Tengis and migrated west, to the Khentii mountains of northern Mongolia. Elbowing living-space between Turks to the west and Tartars to the east, they settled in their new homeland.

YOUNG GENGHIS SURVIVES, AND LEARNS

There, they continued their ways as herders and horse-people, using their iron-working skills to make swords, and also hunting and fighting with their formidable recurved bows. The tribes and clans of herder-warriors feuded constantly with each other, but also developed political skills to bring peace, often with the very same tribes and clans. In the mid-12th century, one Mongol leader briefly united many Mongol clans into a proto-nation, only to have the peace collapse after his death. Allies were absolutely vital, often secured by marriages. These were the war-and-peace skills inherited by Genghis's father Yesugei and passed on to his son when he was born, probably in 1162. Genghis was not his birth-name. Yesugei named the boy Temüjin, after a captured enemy chief. It means 'blacksmith', from the Mongol *temur*, iron, a reminder of the importance of iron in nomadic culture.

Young Temüjin's world was more than just a collection of feuding groups. What is now China was divided into three empires – Jin in the north-east, Western Xia in today's Xinjiang, while in the far south lay Song. Jin, with present-day Beijing as its capital, was the Mongols' traditional





TOP One legend says a falcon saved Genghis from drinking poison

ABOVE Despite numerous conquests, Japan remained elusive

ABOVE-RIGHT The China Genghis grew up in was a divided, feuding realm

RIGHT Dignitaries and commanders lining up to greet the great Khan

UNITING THE TRIBES

How Temüjin made friends of his enemies and conquered the rest

Between 1200 and 1203 Temüjin built a Mongol conglomerate as a result of various conflicts. He was not working to a programme of conquest, picking off his enemies one by one. The situation was more fluid – today's foe might be tomorrow's friend.

Merkits

There had been bad blood between Temüjin's people and the Merkits since before Temüjin was born. Enmity continued for more than 20 years and was certainly fanned into a blaze when his father Yesugei abducted Hoelun, the wife of a Merkit chief. A generation later Merkit raiders carried off Börte, Temüjin's wife. In the rival assault on the Merkits' encampment Temüjin had the support of the Keraites, then the most powerful of the Mongol tribes. The Merkits ceased to be a significant force following their defeat and by 1200 had been absorbed by other tribes.

Keraites (Khereids)

Once the dominant group of the eastern steppes, the Keraites were weakened by internal fighting in the late 12th century. Toghrul, the reigning khan, gained power by murdering his brothers. He was a blood brother of Yesugei and a supporter of Temüjin, but he became involved in Jamukha's (a blood brother of Temüjin's) rebellion. He paid for supporting the losing side by being overthrown in 1200.

Tatars

These were a widespread people of Mongol and Turkic origin divided into several powerful tribes (khanates). They were a formidable barrier to Temüjin's expansion, and he had a personal reason to hate them – it was a Tatar chief who had poisoned his father. In 1202 Temüjin marched east, defeated the Tatars, carried out a massive slaughter of male captives and married their women to his own troops, taking two Tatar wives for himself.

Khamag Mongol

This was the confederation to which Temüjin's people belonged. Until Temüjin came to power it was weak and poorly organised. When his erstwhile friend Jamukha made a bid for supreme rule of the Khamag Mongol the result was the Battle of the Thirteen Sides, which established Temüjin's control of the Khamag Mongol in 1201. It was during this battle that Temüjin sustained an arrow wound to the neck.

Naimans

Temüjin encountered the Naimans, a people of the mountains and the steppe, as he expanded his empire westwards into modern-day Kazakhstan. After a final battle in 1203, in which the Naiman khan, Byirugh, was killed, many Naimans chose to migrate into what is today northeastern China.

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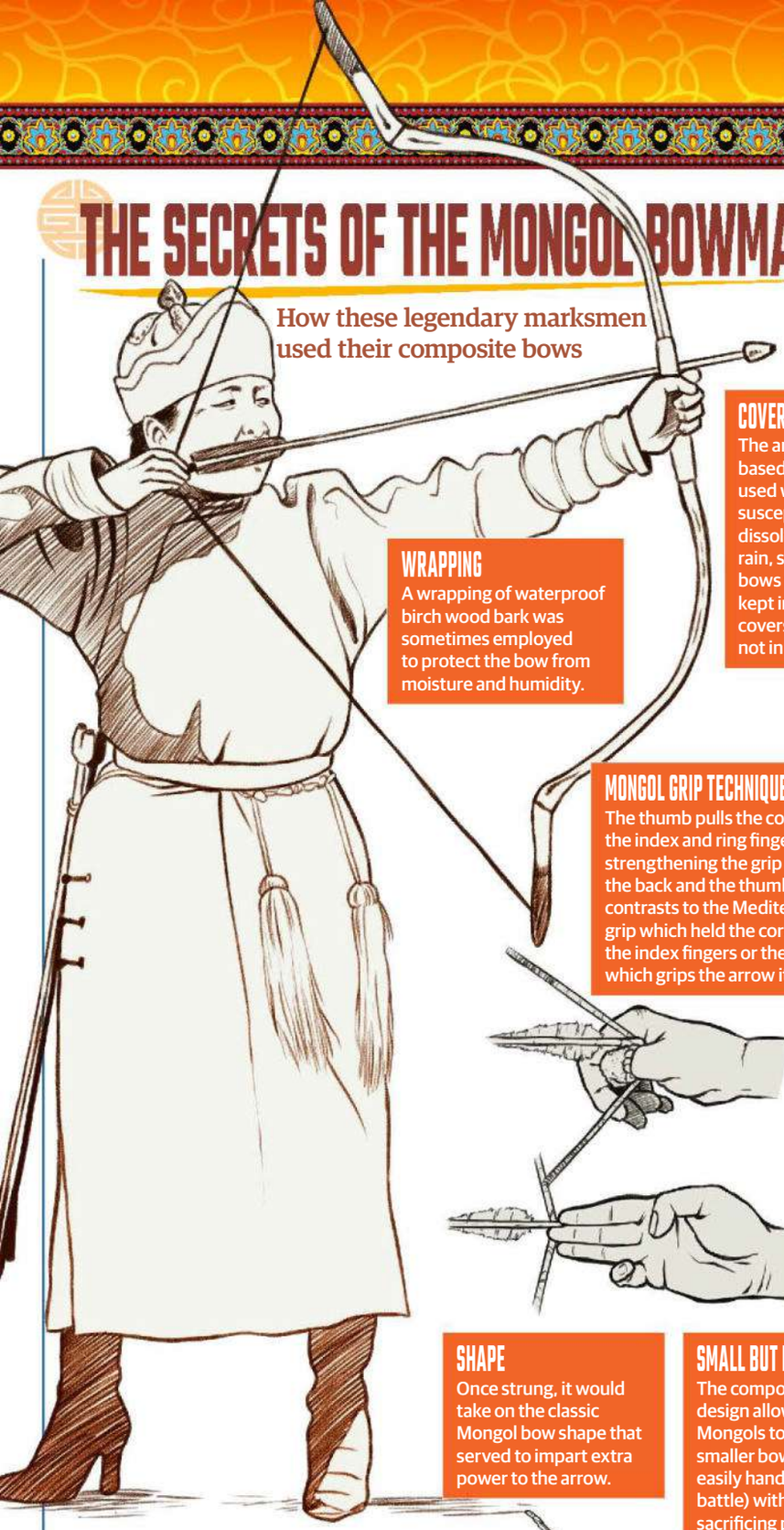
THE SECRETS OF THE MONGOL BOWMAN

How these legendary marksmen used their composite bows



COVER
The animal-based glue used was susceptible to dissolving in rain, so most bows were kept in leather covers when not in use.

WRAPPING
A wrapping of waterproof birch wood bark was sometimes employed to protect the bow from moisture and humidity.

MONGOL GRIP TECHNIQUE
The thumb pulls the cord with the index and ring fingers strengthening the grip around the back and the thumb. This contrasts to the Mediterranean grip which held the cord with the index fingers or the pinch, which grips the arrow itself.

SHAPE
Once strung, it would take on the classic Mongol bow shape that served to impart extra power to the arrow.

SMALL BUT MIGHTY
The composite design allowed the Mongols to use smaller bows (more easily handled in battle) without sacrificing power.

CURVE
Before being strung, the Mongol bow would have a conventional curve, like other bows of the era.

The bow was the most important weapon in the Mongols' arsenal. An ordinary bow, made of wood with a drawstring, was easy to construct, however, the Mongol bow was a completely different entity.

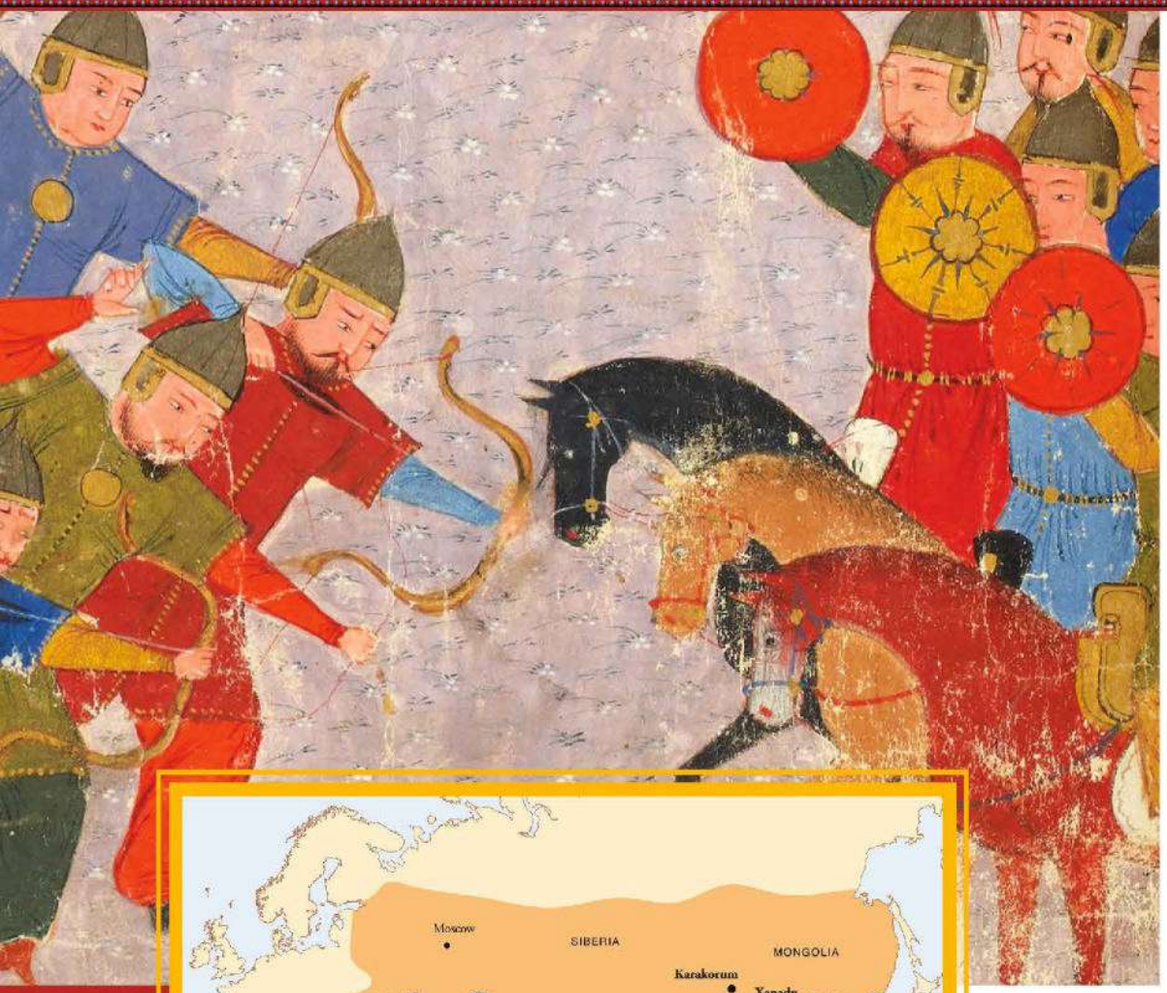
Utilising a composite structure, with wood or bamboo, horn, sinew and animal-based glue, it was far more powerful than a regular bow, but also took far longer to construct. The wooden core had a strip of horn glued to one side, with animal sinews on the opposite side, all held in place with glue. Both horn and animal sinew had greater elasticity compared to wood and could store more energy. And once the component pieces had set together, the bow would be drawn back against its natural curve, creating the familiar shape and imparting even more power into the projectile.

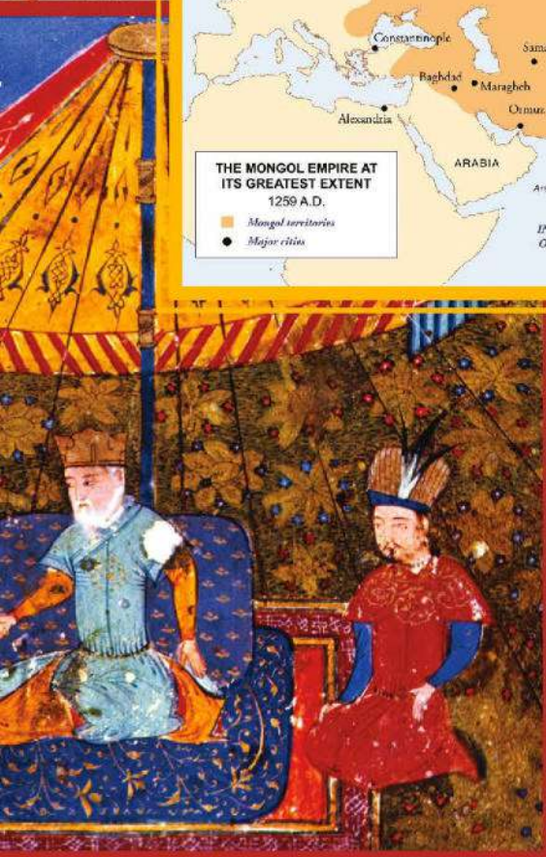
Mongol warriors would carry about 60 arrows into battle – different tips would be utilised for different jobs (incendiary arrows would be used to set fire to buildings, for instance).

Draw strength on the Mongol bow would be anywhere from 27 kilograms and upwards, although claims have been made that some had a draw weight of 73 kilograms (which must have been incredibly rare).

The string would be drawn using only the thumb. This 'Mongolian draw' helped to ensure that the release would be smooth and not detract from the power imparted to the arrow. Many Mongols would use thumb rings to protect their digit from the extreme stress involved in the repeated operation of the recurve bow.

The Mongol bow was accurate up to a range of some 270 metres, but could carry much further with less accuracy. It was also capable of piercing the armour of the day at a range of 90 metres or so.





TOP A miniature of the Mongols taking on the Khwarazmians

ABOVE The full extent of the Mongol Empire by 1259 CE

LEFT A much older Genghis Khan in his garden

and killed his own teenage half-brother after a trivial argument, Hoelun laid into him in a fearful rage. He never forgot. A prime feature of his character was respect not just for his mother, but also for the other women in his life.

So he knew what lack of unity led to – poverty, suffering and death – and also the opposite. His world was hemmed by empires under tight, centralised control. His own distant relative, not long before, had briefly unified the Mongol clans. Security, wealth and comfort stemmed from unity under strong leadership.

GENGHIS TURNS HIS GAZE SOUTH

With these aims, Temüjin turned out to be a genius at steppe politics. It took him 20 years to unite Mongolia's clans and tribes. In 1206, as khan, he was granted his unique title of Genghis (its much-disputed meaning was probably an obsolete Turkic term for 'fierce').

What now? In a culture that lacked currency, he needed booty to keep his followers happy. There were obvious sources. His first capital, Avraga, a little place of a few stone buildings, a temple and an imposing palace-tent, backed on to the Khentii mountains but was also the gateway to the gravel plains of the Gobi and the rich lands of Jin and Western Xia.

Now, he began to show other aspects of his genius. Though he would become the founder of his nation and of the world's greatest land empire, and responsible for deaths by the million, he was much more than a mass murderer. In terms of leadership, he was a phenomenon, starting from almost nothing, rising to lead clan, federation, nation and empire, with consequences reaching down the centuries to affect today's China, and thus the world. Seeing that he would need

> "Though responsible for the death of millions, Genghis was much more than a mass murderer"

His father, leader of his clan, was murdered and his mother Hoelun was rejected by the new leader, in the expectation that she and her children would die, along with Temüjin, his father's potential heir. But Hoelun was a survivor, digging up wild onions to feed her growing family, which included children by her husband's second wife. She instilled into young Temüjin other crucial survival skills, in particular the need for unity and loyalty. The *Secret History* records how when Temüjin shot

enemy, the easiest source of booty, but its walled cities made it a very tough nut to crack for raiders.

Temüjin, the future Genghis Khan, might have been a nobody.

something more than an old-fashioned tribal chiefdom, he rose to a new level of leadership at each stage of his career. Conquest was not enough. You cannot rule in peace if subjects are left as potential rebels. He would need proper government, taxation, records, bureaucrats. To this end, he employed talent wherever he found it.

Perhaps his most astonishing insight was to see that no large-scale government was possible without writing. Chinese script has many fine qualities, but with

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thousands of signs it is hopelessly complicated. Genghis, an illiterate nomad, imported a much simpler script from one of his new subjects, the highly literate Uighurs. That's the script you see today, with few changes, decorating Mongolian bank notes. It is still in everyday use in Inner Mongolia, now part of China.

Jin, with its capital in what is today Beijing, was Genghis's prime target. But Jin, with many well-fortified cities, was allied with Western Xia. Genghis's first foreign adventure was to invade Western Xia. But he did not fully ensure its compliance, with consequences for later events. His flanks temporarily secure, he led his forces across the Gobi to attack Jin. That meant taking out several fortresses on the way and confronting Beijing, with its impregnable walls. A brutal year-long siege starved the city into surrender in 1215. That success gave him more troops and – most crucially – powerful new weapons, like explosives, siege-bows, catapults and battering rams. Other cities capitulated. His army became a snowball, gathering pace with every city taken. Much of north China fell to him, and the rest would have followed, but for a surprising development.

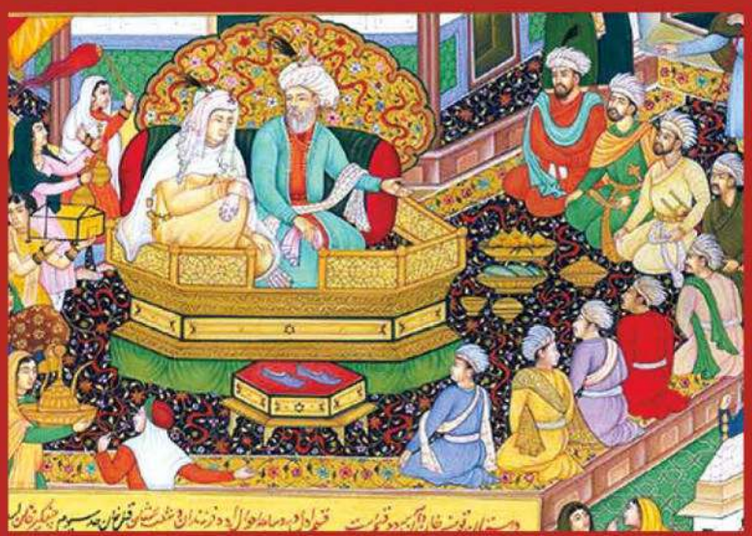
INVADING THE MUSLIM WORLD

In 1218, seeking peaceful expansion or perhaps just more information, he despatched a trade delegation of 100 or more westwards to the Islamic kingdom of Khwarezm – present-day Iran, plus a good chunk of the -stans – with its Silk Road emporia like Samarkand and Bukhara. The governor of the border town, Otrar, chose to see the delegation as a nest of spies, and killed them all – and then, when Genghis sent three envoys to talk, the governor killed those as well.

Genghis, offended beyond measure, put off the conquest of Jin and turned on the west. Before he set out, his favourite wife, Yisui, demanded that he nominate an heir, and he did so, naming his third son Ögedei – another sign of good leadership and planning that many other autocrats have ignored. Needing all the help he could get, he demanded troops from his supposed subject, Western Xia, whose recalcitrant leader refused.

The invasion of the Islamic world was a bloody campaign without precedent. Otrar (where the foolish governor was executed by having molten silver poured into his ears), Samarkand, Bukhara, Merv and other cities fell, with deaths that are impossible to estimate accurately, perhaps

"Perhaps his most astonishing insight was to see that no large-scale government was possible without writing"



TOP-LEFT Rashid al-Din painting of the coronation of Ögedei Khan

ABOVE The Mongol invasion of Persia was one of history's bloodiest wars

LEFT The Genghis Kahn monument in Tsonjin Boldog, Mongolia

TOP-RIGHT A miniature of Genghis Khan in combat from 1430

ABOVE-RIGHT A scene depicting the division of the Mongol Empire among Genghis Khan's sons

two million. The Mongols were expert executioners: it was as easy to cut the throat of a prisoner as to despatch a sheep. Yet this was not indiscriminate slaughter. It had a purpose. Siege warfare is slow and expensive, and it destroys what you want to possess. Genghis's strategy was to destroy a city only if it resisted, sending a message down the line that resistance was useless. 'Urbicide' – the killing of cities – proved brutally effective. Many cities gave up without a struggle. His aim was to take slaves, artisans, women and treasure, but leave most cities intact to produce and trade under Mongol governors.

There was no ideological or religious element to this destruction. The Mongols were animists who revered the Blue Sky, the top deity in a universe of spirits, whose will could be divined by shamans. But there was no missionary urge. They were happy for their subjects to follow their own beliefs. Gibbon, in his *Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire*, suggested that Genghis and his Mongols were tolerant of different religions. But Genghis was no precedent of the Enlightenment. His sole demand was that new subjects serve their new masters. As for their religion, he just didn't care.

The flip side of this agenda was that the Mongols brought with them virtually nothing in terms of culture. They had no art or philosophy or literature (yet) that would enrich their subject-cultures. True, their influence was immense – leaving aside the destruction, they brought together east and west as never before, with immense implications for trade and exploration (Columbus was aiming for China when he sailed westward in 1492). But the Mongols were at best facilitators, not a force for creativity.

THE KEY TO CONQUEST

This and later conquests remain among the most astonishing in world history. How could an army of nomads achieve such success? Horses and the recurved bow are part of the answer. Genghis's leadership is another. But these elements worked only because of a fact of geography. Every army needs supplies – food, fuel, weaponry. Overlong supply lines spell disaster. But the Mongols had all the supplies they needed beneath their horses' hooves, in the form of grass. The grasslands of Asia run from Mongolia to Hungary. As long as the Mongol cavalry had grass, the warriors had transport, meat and drink, even the fermented mares' milk, or koumiss, which is the standard refreshment in the Mongolian countryside today. There was nothing to stop them until the grass ran out, short of the Mediterranean.

The Mongols, well-fuelled and unstoppable, went on to seize much of today's Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan. An astonishing 7,000-kilometre gallop

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THE NEXT KHANS

The successors to Genghis's empire

ÖGEDEI KHAN 1185 - 1241

The third son of Genghis Khan, Ögedei inherited a mighty empire, but looked to expand it even further. He came to the throne in 1229 after his father's death and took the title khagan (meaning 'great khan'). He trusted his commanders to orchestrate wars on multiple fronts, but he looked to preserve defeated regions to make use of their wealth and skills.

GÜYÜK KHAN 1206 - 1248

Grandson to Genghis Khan and eldest son of Ögedei, Güyük was elected to the throne in 1246 following a regency period led by his mother Töregene. His time in charge may have proven contentious, having won out against his cousin Batu who had conquered Russia for the empire, and his interest in Christianity, but he died very shortly after taking charge.

MÖNGKE KHAN 1208 - 1259

Ascending the throne in 1251, Möngke continued to expand the Mongol Empire and as a result was the last Khan able to rule it directly, as those who followed would need to allocate regional leaders to maintain order. His armies crushed the last resistance in Iran, Iraq and Syria, eventually bringing his realm to the Mediterranean Sea. He died in the field, fighting in China.

KUBLAI KHAN 1215 - 1294

The brother of Möngke, Kublai had been a general in his army, looking after the empire's interests in the east. He completed the conquest of China and built on the growing wealth and splendour of the empire. Kublai demonstrated a rare statecraft in managing China in particular, but also the Golden Horde in Russia, Il-Khanate in Persia and steppe nomads, each with their own approaches.

ABOVE A mural of Genghis Khan from modern Dongsheng, Inner Mongolia

RIGHT The four sons gathering around Genghis's deathbed

RIGHT-INSET A Mongol helmet taken by the Japanese some time between 1274 and 1281

right around the Caspian provided information about Russia that would come in useful later. Meanwhile, an advance through the Northwest Frontier into India told Genghis that India would be too great a challenge. In 1225, he returned home to resume the conquest of Western Xia and northern China.

But on this campaign, in the August of 1227, with Western Xia conquered, and with his army poised to invade the Chinese heartland, he fell sick, probably of typhoid, which was ravaging his army. A week later – most likely in a valley that is now part of the Liupan Shan National Forest Park in Ningxia – he died. The campaign came to a sudden halt. His body was rushed back to his homeland in the Khentii mountains of northern Mongolia for burial in a secret grave, the discovery of which would be one of the greatest of archaeological finds.

THE EMPIRE EXPANDS, AGAIN

Genghis's heir, his third son Ögedei, assumed the task of conquest, and took another great step forward. To date, the Mongols had been on one vast looting expedition, with unprecedented results. Success demanded an explanation, conquest needed a proper justification – in short, an ideology.

It ran like this: God – in the form of the Mongol sky-deity the Blue Sky – was on the side of the Mongols. Their success proved it. What limits might Heaven set? Apparently none. The conclusion was clear: the whole world had been given to the Mongols, and it was their divine duty to make all nations on earth acknowledge this fact. Of course, by hindsight, they were doomed to failure. But we should remember that no-one had any idea of the world's true size and complexity.

> "A nasty civil war ended with Genghis's remarkable daughter-in-law, Sorkaktani, hijacking power for her sons"

So on they went. A nasty civil war ended with Genghis's remarkable daughter-in-law, Sorkaktani, hijacking power for her sons. One (Hulegu) took over Persia, another (Möngke) ruled Mongolia, the third (Kublai) would take power in China. Expansion continued, into southern Russia (where descendants were still in place in the 19th century), to Poland, Hungary and the outskirts of Vienna, to the fringes of Egypt, and across the rest of northern China. In 1260, Kublai, master of northern China, became Great Khan, the nominal ruler of a land empire already the largest in world history, and driven on by the vision of world rule.

His first task was to establish himself, both by political choices and military ones. He did this by building his first capital Xanadu, as it is in English – Shang Du, 'Upper Capital' as it is in Chinese, as opposed to Da Du, Great Capital, as Beijing was known. It was up on the edge of the Mongolian plateau. But he could not hope to rule all China, let alone the world, from the grasslands. He settled in a rebuilt Beijing and extended his ideology by turning Buddhist, to ensure that Tibet remained under Mongol control and so that he could claim the Buddhist title of Universal Ruler. Then came the conquest of the rest of China, not with nomadic cavalry but with a Chinese river-borne navy and an army of siege-weapons. A vast advance southward ended in 1279, in a naval battle in the far south, when the top Chinese adviser took hold of the young heir to the Song throne and leapt into the sea with him.

Now, in line with Heaven's will, for the rest of the world.

At this point, Kublai came up against reality. Four invasions – Vietnam, Java and Japan (twice) – all ended in disaster. The 1281 armada against Japan failed when a typhoon destroyed his 4,000 ships – the greatest sea-borne invasion until D-Day and the greatest naval disaster ever.

AN ENDURING LEGACY

But those disasters still left an astonishing legacy. It is impossible to tell the history of a score of nations across Eurasia and the Far East without mentioning the Mongols. But the greatest consequence is China pretty much as we know it today. The Mongol Empire itself fell apart, as Genghis's squabbling heirs went their own ways, but Kublai had made himself a Chinese emperor, with a Chinese dynasty, the Yuan. His realm united all China, including Mongolia, from the rich belly of the east to the mountains and deserts of the west and the northern grasslands. The Mongols were thrown out of China in 1368, but no later dynasty reversed Kublai's acquisitions. That is why Yunnan and Tibet and the Western Regions of Xinjiang are ruled from Beijing today.

True, Mongolia itself broke away from China in the early 20th century when China was weak. Many Chinese today see all Mongolia – not just Inner Mongolia, which has been in the Chinese sphere for well over a century – as a part of greater China, as it had been under Kublai, who was, after all, a Chinese emperor. And to many Chinese, it would be the restoration of the natural order of things if all of Mongolia and China were reunited, and the empire started by Kublai's grandfather partially restored.

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DEADLY FASHION

If looks could kill, these fashion trends saw their followers pay the ultimate price

Written by
Emma Slattery Williams

Staying on trend with the latest fashion is not just a modern concern – we have been trying to look our best and beat the rest almost since time began. This obsession with the cutting edge of style, however, has often come at a cost. From broken bones and fainting to disfigurement and ultimately death, these fatal fashion fads demonstrate how far some of our ancestors would go in search of style.

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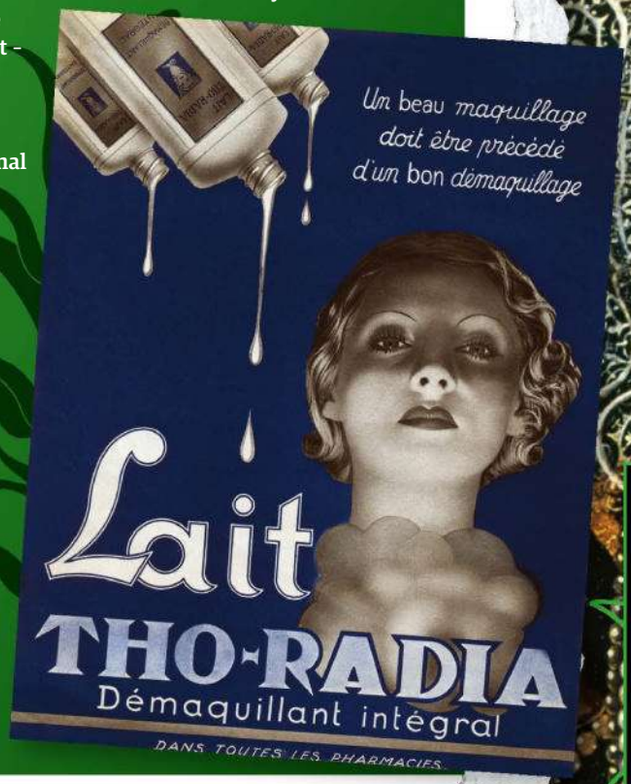
RADIOACTIVE COSMETICS

LATE 19TH-EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Once radium was discovered in 1898, various uses for it were suggested including cosmetics. The likes of perfumes, toothpaste, lipsticks and creams containing radium and thorium chloride became especially popular in France.

Before the dangers of being exposed to radiation were fully understood, many believed it contained energy that could be anti-ageing or give a glowing complexion to the skin. The craze of radioactivity even led to some products claiming to be radioactive when they weren't – just to join in with the hype.

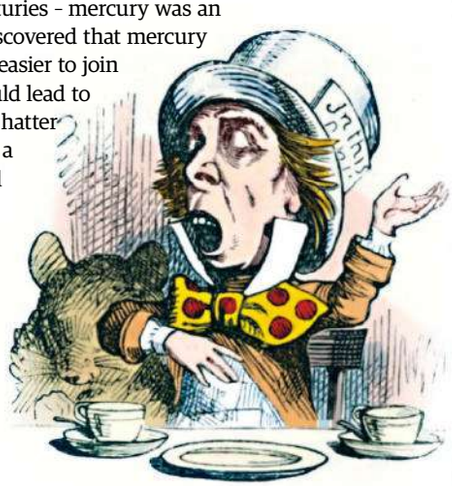
Rather than rejuvenate the skin, these harmful potions would lead to vomiting, internal bleeding and eventually cancer. Thankfully, the majority of people who used radioactive cosmetics didn't consume them to toxic levels, but American socialite and amateur golfer Eben Byers wasn't so lucky. After suffering an arm injury, a doctor prescribed him Radithor – a tonic made of radium dissolved in water. Initially he thought the drinks made him feel energised but after consuming around 1,400 doses his teeth began to fall out and eventually his jaw came away. He died in 1932 due to multiple cancers.



MERCURY IN HATS

18TH-19TH CENTURY

It wasn't just those who partook in the latest fashion trends that could be at risk. Sometimes those who made the clothing could fall victim too. During the manufacturing of felt and fur hats – popular in the 18th and 19th centuries – mercury was an unfortunate ingredient. It was discovered that mercury made the hairs more pliable and easier to join together. Prolonged exposure could lead to poisoning and the so-called mad hatter disease – hence the term 'mad as a hatter'. Nasty symptoms included tremors, headaches, personality changes and diminished brain function. This horrible condition is thought to have been the inspiration for the character of the Mad Hatter in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*.



LEAD MAKEUP

ANTIQUITY – 19TH CENTURY

Today, many of us are desperate for a sun-kissed glow, but in years gone by being pale was the desired look. A pale complexion was a status symbol and indicated that the person was of a higher class, while being tanned implied you were probably out in the fields labouring and therefore of a lower class. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, red rouged cheeks were added to the trend. To achieve this, lead paint was often used in cosmetics, which would whiten the skin and was also known as Venetian Ceruse. As far back as the ancient Romans, Egyptians and Greeks cosmetics containing lead were favoured in order to whiten the complexion.

Regular use could cause toxic levels of lead to enter the body and result in muscle paralysis and abdominal pain as well as intellectual impairment. What made this makeup even more deadly was that the lead in Venetian Ceruse could cause blemishes, hair loss and scarring on the skin so users would then apply even more to cover this up.

A tragic death caused by this dangerous concoction was that of Countess Maria Coventry. A famed society beauty during the reign of George II, Maria Coventry died at just 27 of lead poisoning, due to the Venetian Ceruse she was so fond of.

Elizabeth I was another famous fan of lead makeup and was seen in many portraits with a pale complexion, and potentially used Venetian Ceruse to cover scars left by smallpox.

STIFF SHIRT COLLARS

19TH CENTURY

While women have often been the victims of dangerous fashion trends, men didn't always escape unscathed either. Detachable collars, fastened to the shirt with studs, became popular during the Victorian period and starch was used to stiffen them. This is where the danger crept in. Germans called them *vatermorder* (father killer) collars as they could cut off the blood supply to the carotid artery, which supplies oxygen to the brain, and essentially suffocate the wearer. During the day this could be felt and remedied easily enough, but a few glasses of wine and a comfy chair by the fire was all that was needed to fall asleep still dressed. The back of the stiff collar would cause the men to sleep with their heads tilted forwards and potentially choke them to death as a result. Even outside of this, the choking collar could cause a brain abscess or cut the throat itself with its sharp corners.

TOXIC GREEN DIE

19TH CENTURY

Paris Green or another variant known as Scheele's Green were beloved pigments of the Victorians. Used in paintings by Claude Monet, as well as in wallpaper, it was valued for its deep emerald colour. Soon women were flocking to have dresses made in this colour as it lasted longer than other similar shades – making onlookers green with envy.

Alas, this popular colour was achieved by mixing copper with high levels of arsenic meaning it was highly toxic. Vomiting, skin lesions and cancer could all result and women weren't aware that it was their dresses that were making them ill.

WET MUSLIN DRESSES

18TH-19TH CENTURY

Muslin and cotton dresses became all the rage in the 18th and 19th centuries, especially after being worn by French queen and fashion aficionado Marie Antoinette.

After the fall of the French monarchy, cotton dresses became seen as the material of the common people and everyone wanted to be seen in these thin, flimsy dresses – whatever the weather. Getting wet in such clingy material was not greatly advised, however.

This chilly trend could cause pneumonia and, in some cases, even death. It's been suggested some women even dampened the dresses on purpose, but this claim could be a popular myth. Illness related to such clothing was dubbed the muslin disease.

Image source: wiki/Met Museum/Catharine Breyer Van Bomel Foundation Fund, 1980

FOOT BINDING

10TH-20TH CENTURY

Thought to have been inspired by a 10th-century Chinese court dancer with particularly dainty feet, children in China between the ages of four to nine would have their feet bound. This involved the feet being tightly bandaged with the smaller toes tucked underneath the foot to achieve a small and pointed shape. Over time this would often break bones in the feet to achieve the desired effect. As well as excruciating pain and problems walking in later life, fatal infections could also occur.

Foot binding prevailed for so long as it was seen as a status symbol and the epitome of feminine beauty, but the practice was eventually banned in China in 1912 – although it continued in secret for some decades later. It could be argued that wearing sky-high stilettos today shows that some people will still endure some level of pain and discomfort to be fashionable.

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THE HOBBLE SKIRT

EARLY 20TH CENTURY

These unusual skirts had an extremely narrow hem in order to prevent the wearer's stride being too wide. Briefly popular during the early 20th century, they severely hindered how the wearer could walk but were thought to make them appear more graceful. It's believed that this quirky trend was inspired by Edith Ogilby Berg – the first female American woman to be a passenger on a flight when she accompanied aviation pioneer Wilbur Wright in 1908. Berg tied a rope around her dress so it wouldn't blow around in the wind and this caught the eye of a French designer.

Interestingly, women at this time were rebelling against societal norms. They were becoming more physically active and the suffrage movement was gaining momentum, so this trend could have been a potential attempt to subdue them. The difficulty walking that hobble skirts posed led to the railway in New York creating streetcars with no step so the wearers could board them easier.

Many deaths were reported due to the restrictive nature of hobble skirts such as women stumbling off bridges and not being able to quickly move out of the way of traffic or horses. Unsurprisingly, they fell out of fashion, especially with the onset of World War I. Hobble skirts were not considered conducive to the war effort.

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FONTANGE AND POUF

17TH-18TH CENTURY

Having the highest, largest and most outrageous head of hair was all the rage in the French court. A pouf – an elaborate hairstyle using a wire frame, pillow as well as false hair – was often covered in animal fat to keep it in shape. They could remain in place for up to two weeks and attract vermin such as rats to scurry in and out of the coiffures.

The fontange on the other hand was an elaborate lace hairpiece with ribbons held by a wire frame that made it very difficult to move. They were also prone to catching on fire. As they became larger and more elaborate, more pins were needed to keep it in place which could be deadly to both the wearer and those around them.

CORSETS

17TH-20TH CENTURY

The corset is one of those items from a woman's wardrobe that instantly transports you to an earlier age. Between the 17th and early 20th centuries, the corset was a key part of a woman's attire and consisted of a tightly fitted bodice with boning made of wood, bone and later metal. It created the feminine v-shaped silhouette that was considered the ideal at the time as well as preventing slouching. The corset is also thought to have inspired the term 'straitlaced' – women who wore them were expected to uphold the model moral behaviours of the day, the corset effectively controlling a woman's body physically and socially. Those who did not wear one however were considered 'loose' in more ways than one.

It's clear that if a corset was laced too tightly it would cause discomfort and difficulties in breathing. Constant use of a corset could put increasing pressure on the internal organs and even force them to move position. Women were reported to faint due to constriction and corsets were blamed for many deaths and illnesses. There was one report of a woman who died of an apparent seizure – during the post-mortem, pieces of corset steel totalling eight inches were found to have pierced her heart.

W. HULL KING & SON'S
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As Advertised in the QUEEN Newspaper
Or Matchless SHAPE and great Durability
All Whalebone Corsets

BELLADONNA EYE DROPS

19TH CENTURY

Large pupils were another attractive feature that Victorian women strove for as this was thought to look seductive. This has been tied to looking like you're suffering from consumption, with pale skin and watery eyes. This rather specific and disturbing trend led to some women literally putting poison into their eyes. Belladonna (also known as deadly nightshade, which should have been a clue) was used in eye drops and would sometimes be used to dilate the pupils. Some would turn to citrus juices to do the same job, but belladonna would last much longer. Lesser symptoms could include dry mouth, slurred speech, light sensitivity and flushed skin, but could lead to hallucinations, memory loss, blindness and ultimately death. A high price to pay for 'beauty'.

MYSTERY CULTS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

In the Greco-Roman world, forgotten cults enacted arcane rituals whose secrets historian Hugh Bowden reveals...

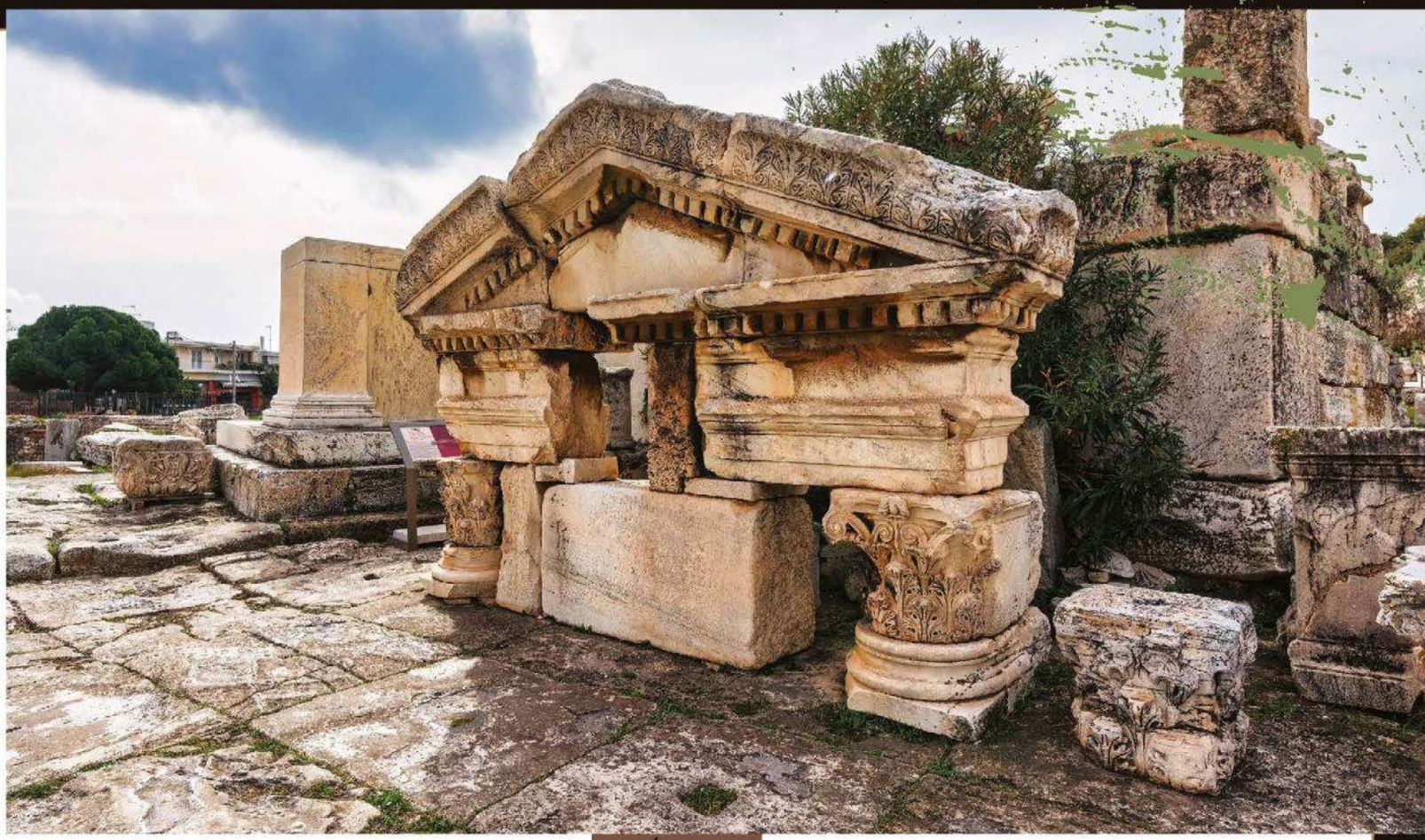
Interview by Callum McKelvie

© Bel Crosier

EXPERT BIO

HUGH BOWDEN

Professor Hugh Bowden is head of classics at King's College London. He is the author of *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World*.



In the time of the Ancient Greeks and Romans, secret societies practised rituals, the knowledge of which has since been lost to time. These rituals, known as 'mysteries', continue to fascinate historians who seek to piece together disparate sources, from scant written accounts to evidence found at archaeological sites, in an attempt to further understand these fascinating cults. Professor Hugh Bowden of King's College London has spent many years studying Greek religion and to celebrate the release of his seminal work, *Mystery Cults In The Ancient World*, in paperback, he spoke to us about these groups, their various practices and the difficulties posed by researching something intended to remain secret.

ABOVE The ruins of Eleusis in Greece, where the Mysteries were based

BELOW An imagined 19th century depiction of the secretive Eleusinian festival

In the introduction to your book, you define both the use of the word 'mystery' and the term 'mystery cult' in this context, could you just explain these definitions for the benefit of our readers?

The word 'mystery' originates from an ancient Athenian festival, the Eleusinian Mysteries, and in this context actually refers to a festival involving initiation. 'Mystery cult' is a modern term and can be an unhelpful one. For example, the Eleusinian Mysteries are a festival in honour of the goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone (referred to in ancient times as Kore). And whilst initiation was important, there were lots of other activities that were just part of the worship of that goddess that were not particularly 'cult-like'. However, other cults like the Mysteries of Mithras involve meetings of small groups of initiates and in that sense is closer to what we would consider cult practices. So we don't use the terms 'mystery' or 'cult' quite in the way that we do in modern parlance, though there is some overlap.

Why were these separate groups linked under the mystery cults?

It's a term we tend to use to describe a number of religious activities. Some are characterised by initiation, in which secret rituals took place that you weren't allowed to talk about. But there are other groups generally referred to as mystery cults such as the worship of Dionysus, which may not have involved initiation. These cults involved people meeting and engaging in what are

"CULTS LIKE THE MYSTERIES OF MITHRAS INVOLVE MEETINGS OF SMALL GROUPS OF INITIATES"

All images © Getty Images

referred to as 'ecstatic activities'. Ancient Greek writers already saw connections between these ecstatic cults and the initiation ceremonies of festivals like the Eleusinian Mysteries. In my book I argue that the common feature between all these groups is a particular kind of religious experience that resulted in altered states of consciousness. The members of these groups interpreted these experiences as coming into close contact with the gods.

Why was secrecy so important to these groups?

It's interesting because it's fairly clear that there was no secret knowledge and no real secrets to betray. I think it's the idea that what you're doing is special, privileged and only available to people who have gone through the process. So it is not secret knowledge, it's that your experience is not to be shared with non-initiates. Ultimately, because of your experience, your relationship with the gods is now different from non-initiates. But I think it's important to say that for those involved this wasn't their only religious activity. They would have been involved in others, either public or private.

What are the origins of these 'mystery cults'?

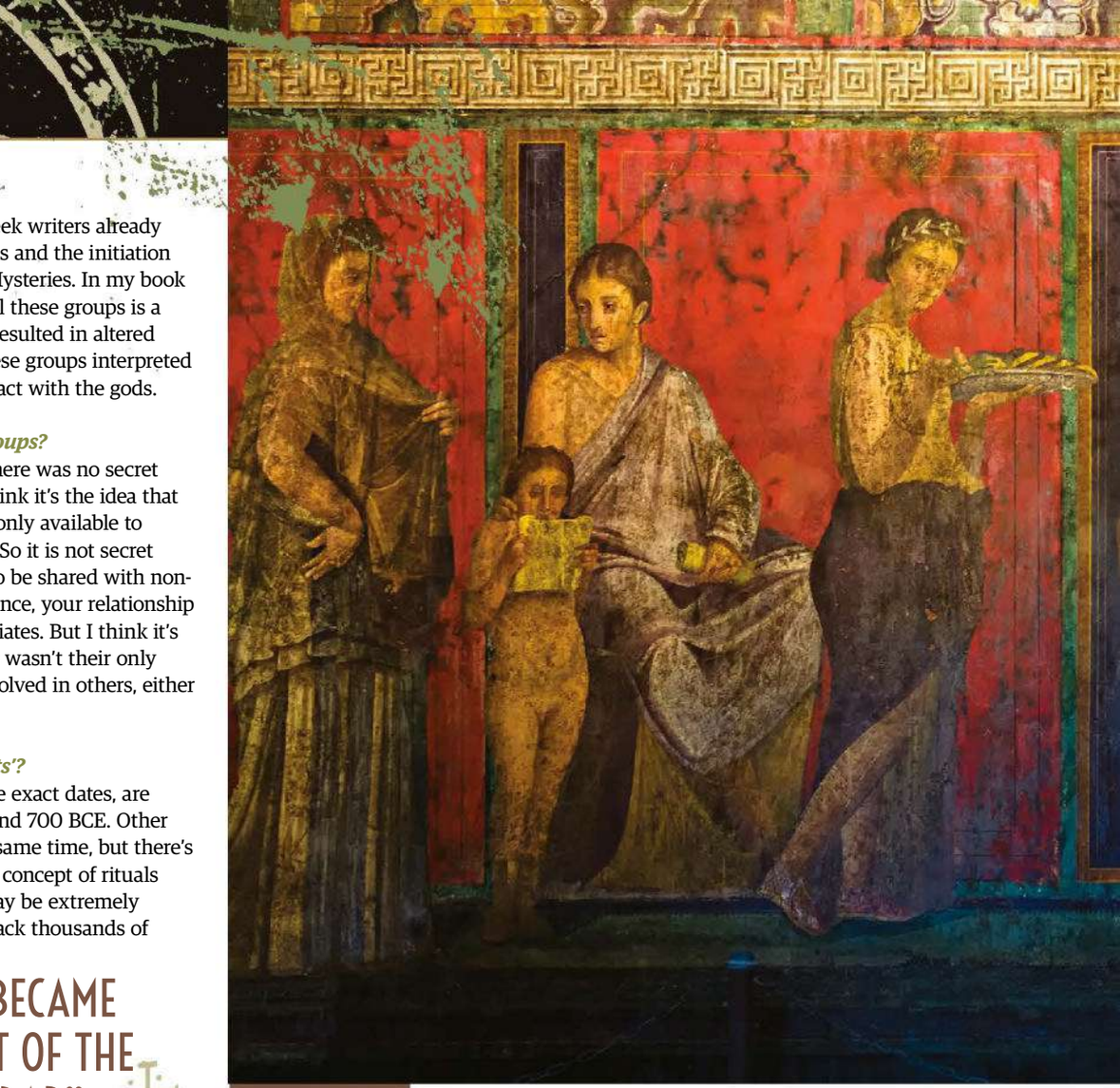
Probably the earliest, although we don't have exact dates, are the Eleusinian Mysteries which started around 700 BCE. Other mystery cults may have started around the same time, but there's work by anthropologists which suggests the concept of rituals intended to invoke contact with the gods may be extremely ancient. And so these practices could date back thousands of years before the mystery cults. However it is around 700 BCE that these practices emerge with some kind of state or community oversight that then gradually grows into religious festivals.

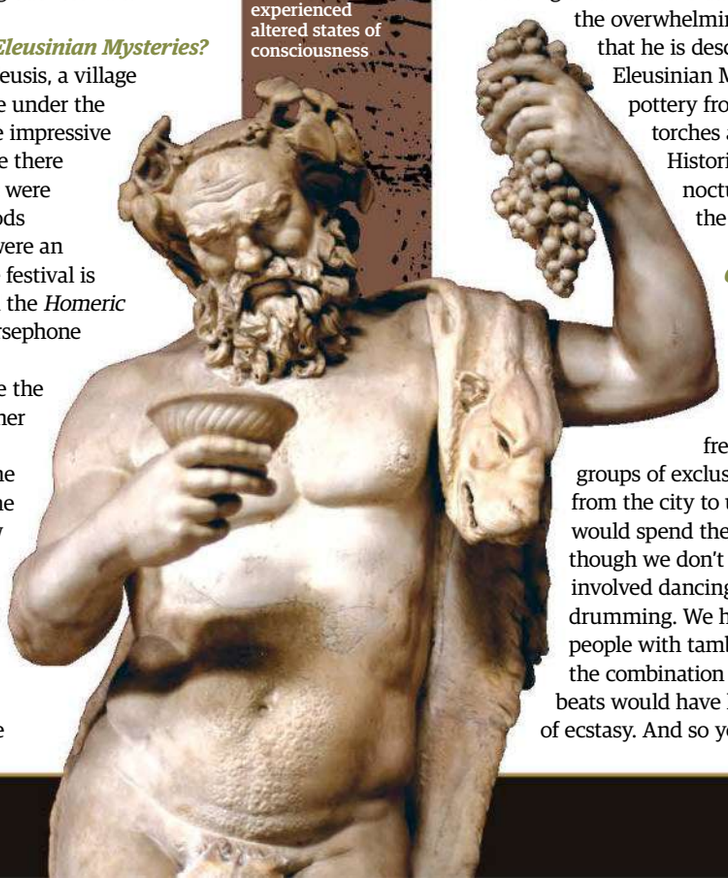
> "THE INITIATIONS BECAME AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ATHENIAN CALENDAR"

Can you tell us a little bit more about the Eleusinian Mysteries?

The Eleusinian Mysteries are named after Eleusis, a village that was in the region of Attica and therefore under the control of Athens. Eleusis was known for the impressive Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone where there would be a yearly initiation. Most Athenians were initiated into the Mysteries and in later periods some outsiders were too. So the initiations were an important city festival. The story behind the festival is told in a poem from around 600 BCE, called the *Homeric Hymn To Demeter*, which describes how Persephone was stolen by Hades. In the Hymn, Demeter spends time in Eleusis and attempts to make the son of the king immortal, but the boy's mother is upset by this. Instead Demeter says that whilst the Eleusinians won't be immortal, she will teach them her secrets – in particular, the secrets of agriculture. So the Athenians view Eleusis as a very spiritual place and the initiations become an important part of the Athenian calendar.

During the festival there are public aspects, including a big procession and sacrifices, but then there are the more secretive elements which includes nighttime rituals. We have some idea of what happened there because some later writers claimed to reveal the secret rituals and others talk about them in very general terms. For example, Plutarch, who talks about the experience of the mysteries involving wandering around in the dark before sudden bright light and the overwhelming feeling of joy, and it is assumed that he is describing the experience of the Eleusinian Mysteries. We also have vases and pottery from Eleusis that show people carrying torches alongside Demeter and Persephone. Historians think therefore that torches and nocturnal activity were important parts of the ceremony.

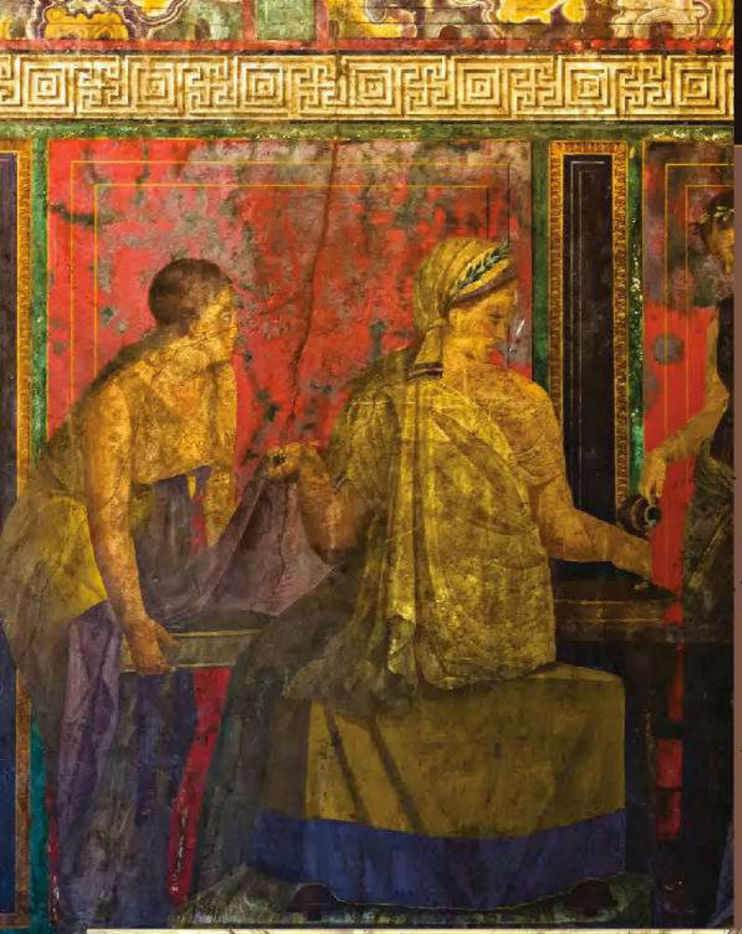




BELOW Dionysus, the god of wine and theatre whose cult may have experienced altered states of consciousness

Can you tell us a little bit about the cult of Dionysus?

The cult of Dionysus is an interesting one and quite different to the Eleusinian Mysteries. Every four or two years or maybe more frequently, there would be a night when groups of exclusively female initiates would go out from the city to uncultivated territory where they would spend the night and practise their rituals – though we don't know what this involved. I think it involved dancing, shrieking or singing and possibly drumming. We have vase paintings with pictures of people with tambourine like instruments. I believe the combination of singing, dancing and strong beats would have had the effect of leading to a state of ecstasy. And so you would feel that Dionysus himself



LEFT A fresco discovered in a villa in Pompeii that is thought to show one of the rituals of the Cult of Dionysus

BELOW An illustration by Alan Sorrell showing an imagined initiation ceremony inside the Temple of Mithras

BOTTOM Eager members of the public queue to see the recently discovered Temple of Mithras in London in 1954

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has joined you. The women who did this would come back to the city the next day or so and resume their normal lives. But they would have had this ecstatic experience and the city would be understood to be honouring Dionysus by having these women behave in that way. Except from the nocturnal activity and the intention of achieving an ecstatic state, it's very different from the Eleusinian Mysteries.

What's one of the most obscure examples of these groups?

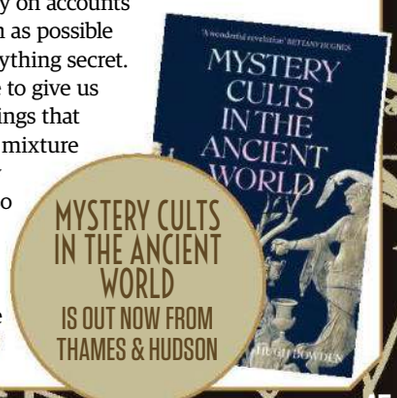
One of my favourites is the Mysteries of Andania, named after a small town in the Peloponnese in Greece. We have a very detailed inscription from 91 BCE which claims to describe the reestablishment of an ancient festival, though it may have been invented at that point. This inscription was found in two halves, built into the doorway of a church and it gives details about aspects of this festival. The Mysteries of Andania was in honour of the 'Great Gods', so unlike some of the other festivals it's not in honour of a known deity and is more vague. Although we don't have much detail about the initiations, because of the inscription we have a lot of information about the festival's procession and other activities. For example there are very strict instructions for the festival goers about camping. These include the size of the tent, what you can keep in it and what you're allowed to wear during the procession. In some ways it's a festival like Glastonbury, rather than Christian religious festivals. And whilst all this is going on we can only imagine what secret activities were occurring involving the initiates.

Were these cults stamped out or did they fade away with time?

There's very little evidence that these cults were actively stamped out, although some Christian emperors did attempt to control non-Christian activity. For example Emperor Theodosius introduced a ban on nocturnal activity but the governor of Athens successfully argued that the Eleusinian Mysteries were ancient and significant and therefore should be exempt. When they eventually disappeared it was because Athens was sacked by the Goths in 396 CE and the sanctuary Eleusis was severely damaged. By then the majority of the rich were Christian and not interested in financing repairs. So the cult died out. Similarly, the temple of Mithras in London (which you can go and visit) was abandoned probably due to a lack of interest. So it's not that there was an attempt to stamp these groups out, it's just that too few people were interested in carrying these practices on.

How hard is it researching something that was actively kept secret?

In cases such as the Cult of Mithras, we have archaeological evidence. There are lots of temples that have been excavated all over the Mediterranean and Western Europe, so although there is little written surrounding the Cult of Mithras, archaeologists have been able to determine much from these sites. For those that have written evidence, we rely on accounts that are trying to say as much as possible without actually revealing anything secret. Despite this they are still able to give us a broad idea of the kind of things that might have taken place. It's a mixture of archaeology, contemporary texts and inscriptions, but also modern anthropological and psychological work that can tell us how people may have reacted to the ceremonies the ancient writers described.



MYSTERY CULTS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD
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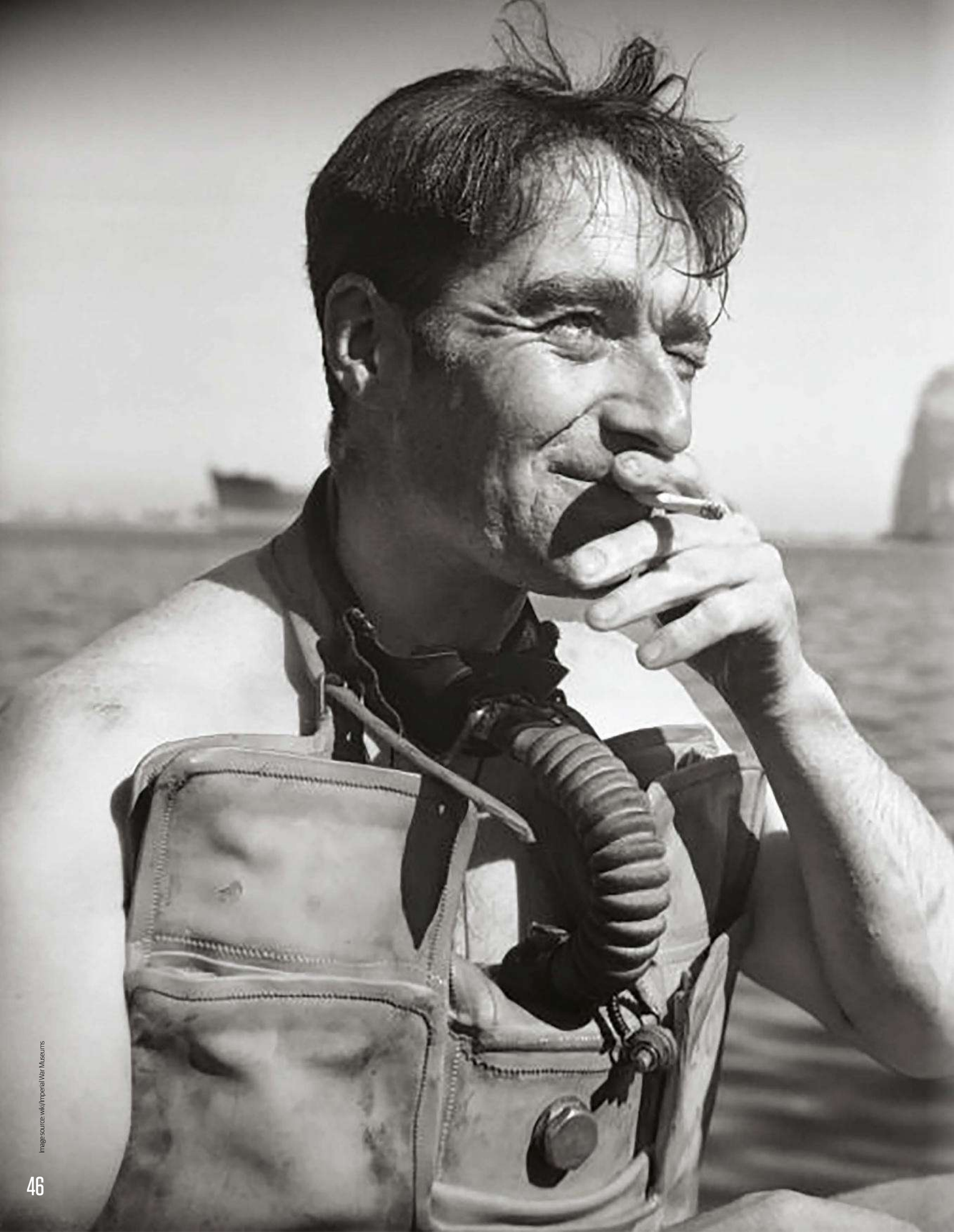


Image source: wiki/Imperial War Museums

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF COMMANDER CRABB

He was a war hero and Britain's number one diver, but during a secret mission investigating a Russian cruiser, he vanished never to return...

Written by Callum McKelvie

On 19 April 1956, Lieutenant-Commander Lionel "Buster" Crabb vanished into the murky waters of Portsmouth Harbour, never to return. Crabb was a diver of some renown and had been investigating the Russian cruiser Ordzhonikidze on a secret spy mission for MI6. A hero of World War II, he helped defend British ships at port in Gibraltar from Italian saboteurs and afterwards became a public figure as well as an occasional spy. Then, at the age of 47 he seemingly disappeared off the face of the earth.

The important files pertaining to Crabb's disappearance remain under embargo and their contents top secret until at least 2057. Was he murdered attempting to defect? Captured by Soviet agents? Or was his death simply an accident? Commander Crabb's fateful final dive is just one part of a life story as enigmatic as the circumstances surrounding his disappearance.

A MAN ADRIFT

Lionel Kenneth Phillip Crabb was born on 28 January 1909 to a poor family in Streatham, South West London. His family's poverty was compounded in 1914 when his father was killed during action in World War I. Lionel was only five years old. As a youth he spent time studying in Brighton, but he seemed to have struggled academically and detested the experience. According to Mike and Jacqui Welham in their book *The Crabb Enigma*, he earned a reputation as the family's 'black sheep', preferring a more outgoing and adventurous lifestyle.

Even at this young age, Crabb had fantasies of a life at sea. He spent three years on the training ship Conway but ran away to the United States where he remained for a short time. By the 1930s he returned to England and it is here that his life becomes difficult to follow. According to the Welhams he had an unhappy experience working as an underwear model, before either jointly running an ▶

"HE COULD OFTEN BE SEEN STRUTTING THE STREETS WEARING A MONOCLE AND CARRYING A DISTINCTIVE SWORD STICK WITH A SILVER CRAB-SHAPED HANDLE"

The Ordzhonikidze arrives in Portsmouth the day before Crabb's disappearance

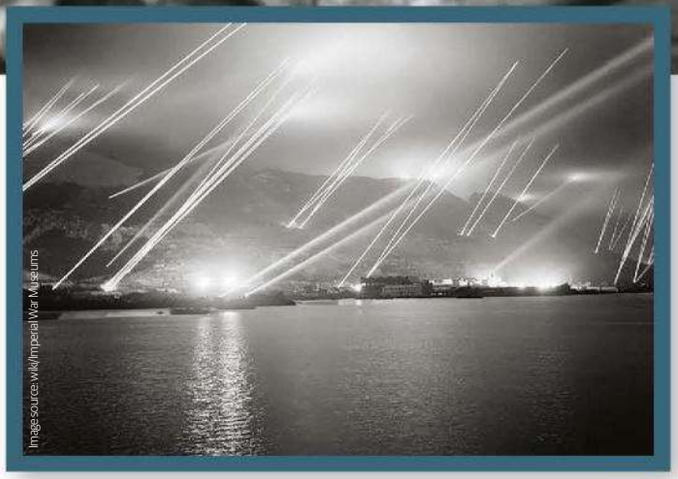


Image source: wiki/Imperial War Museums

art studio or at the very least working as a salesman at one. Crabb's natural charm would have made him perfect for such a job, but he was also known as an eccentric. He could often be seen strutting the streets wearing a monocle and carrying a distinctive sword stick with a silver crab-shaped handle.

However, Crabb still harboured a desire to see the world and never stayed in one place long. For a time he lived in China where he first dabbled in the murky world of espionage, spying on Soviet forces for Chinese nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek. But back in Europe, war was on the horizon. Crabb returned to England in 1940 only to be rejected from the Royal Navy due to poor eyesight. However, he was able to join up as an underwater bomb disposal officer and, after undergoing training, received his commission in 1941. Within a year Crabb was posted to the place that would make him a hero of the war – Gibraltar.

CRABB AT WAR

Located on the south coast of Spain, Gibraltar was the only remaining piece of Allied territory in mainland Europe. During the war Spain was technically neutral but under a fascist regime, it regularly provided covert support to both Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy. One problem the British Navy at Gibraltar faced was Italian underwater saboteurs based in the Spanish port of Algeciras. As much of Allied shipping was controlled and organised from Gibraltar, the harbour was an appealing target for the Italian frogmen. They attached limpet mines or manned torpedoes known as Chariots to the hulls of the waiting ships.

The mission of the Underwater Working Party, to which Crabb was attached, was to locate these explosives and neutralise them before they caused loss of life. The divers' gear however was limited. Instead of working with professional equipment, they had to rely on the Davis Submarine Escape Apparatus, which as the name implies was designed for use during emergencies onboard submarines. They had no wetsuits or fins, wearing swimming trunks and sports shoes with weights attached. What was worse, the team designated to retrieve the bombs consisted of only two divers.

Crabb's intended role was to dismantle the bombs once they were brought ashore. However, when he discovered the lack of manpower afforded to the Underwater Working Party, he realised he too would have to learn to dive. Despite having no prior diving experience, he was purportedly something of a natural. This was all the more miraculous because Crabb was a weak swimmer, barely able to complete three lengths of the average swimming pool.

Although Crabb's team never comprised more than six divers at any one time, they fought valiantly against the attackers. Despite the UWP's war with the Italians being a violent and bloody one, Crabb seems to have genuinely respected the enemy and viewed them as equals. At one point, two Italian divers were killed and their bodies brought to the surface. Crabb made sure they were given a full naval burial at sea. Although seen as a moving gesture by some, it frustrated and angered

ABOVE-INSET Gibraltar, where Crabb worked to protect the bay from Italian saboteurs, shown here lit up with searchlights

TOP-INSET When his work at Gibraltar was completed, Crabb was sent to Livorno and Venice in Italy to help clear the ports of mines and wreckage

"THE SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIS, ALSO KNOWN AS MI6) IMMEDIATELY HATCHED A PLAN TO SEND A DIVER BELOW THE ORDZHONIKIDZE ON A RECONNAISSANCE MISSION"

All images © Alamy, © Getty Images

others. However, alongside the bodies Crabb was also able to recover some useful equipment – including fins, which the British divers were still without.

But Crabb did not spend all his time in Gibraltar fighting off attacks from Italian frogmen. In 1943, the UWP were dispatched to recover the bodies and vital documents from a plane that had crashed shortly after take off. The plane had been carrying the Polish general Władysław Sikorski. His suspicious death has led to theories as to whether the Soviet Union, supposedly distrusting him, sought to have Sikorski liquidated. This is all the more believable due to the then director of British intelligence in Gibraltar being one Kim Philby, later revealed as a Soviet spy and one of the infamous Cambridge Five.

But for the moment all focus was on recovering the bodies and the all-important documents. Crabb's mission was an urgent one: not only was there the risk that the tide would interfere with the crash sight, there was the more pressing concern of enemy divers getting there first. Despite the mission's difficulty, Crabb made the UWP dive day and night until all 18 bodies, microfilm and documents were brought ashore.

Slowly, the Italian attacks became less frequent. According to the Welhams, the work of the Underwater Working Party and Lionel Crabb meant that the bay at Gibraltar was simply too well defended. Finally, on 8 September 1943 any fears of further attacks were abated when the Italian forces surrendered to the Allies. For his work in Gibraltar, Crabb was promoted to the position of Lieutenant Captain and awarded the George Medal. Crabb spent the final years of the war in Venice and Livorno, where he worked to clear the port of wrecks and explosives. He was decommissioned in 1947.

CIVILIAN DIVER

Crabb returned to civilian life and took a job as a furniture salesman. Yet the underwater world continued to hold a fascination and he regularly worked as a freelance diver. In the 1950s he helped hunt for the wreck of a Spanish galleon off the coast of Tobermory, Scotland enlisting the help of two Naval ships. Unfortunately, as Colin Martin and Geoffrey Parker state in their book *The Spanish Armada*, "the operation proved a fiasco that ended in awkward parliamentary questions about why taxpayers' money had been used to sponsor a private treasure hunt."

Crabb was also contacted by the Navy to help with more sombre operations.

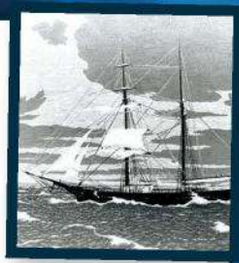
VANISHING ACTS

Lionel Crabb is not the only case of an unsolved disappearance from history, here are five famous examples

Amelia Earhart

Famous for being the first woman to cross the Atlantic Ocean by plane and also the first to make a non-stop transatlantic flight, Amelia Earhart disappeared somewhere over the Pacific Ocean in 1937. It is suspected that, while attempting to complete an around-the-world flight, Earhart and her navigator were killed during a plane crash. However, while this is the most likely explanation, in the decades since there have been numerous conspiracy theories. According to the National Air and Space Museum, one claim is she was captured by the Japanese and forced to broadcast propaganda under the name 'Tokyo Rose' during World War II.

The Mary Celeste



On 5 December 1872, the Mary Celeste was discovered adrift at sea. When she was boarded, not a soul of her ten-person crew could be found. Unusually none of the crew's belongings had been taken, although one of the lifeboats had gone. There were also no signs of a struggle or emergency, however there were a few feet of water in the hold. In the century since her disappearance, the Mary Celeste has become arguably the most famous nautical vanishing.

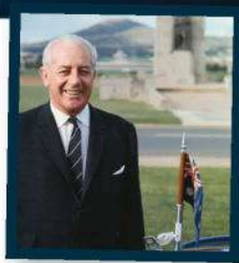
Flannan Isles Lighthouse

In December of 1900, Donald MacArthur, Thomas Marshall and James Ducat vanished from the lighthouse on Flannan Isles in the Outer Hebrides. Unusually, the log at the lighthouse complained of bad storms, yet no storms were recorded in this area. The door and gate were also locked and the beds were unmade. What happened on Flannan Isles remains a mystery and has inspired everything from a 2019 film, *The Vanishing*, to a 1970s episode of *Doctor Who*.

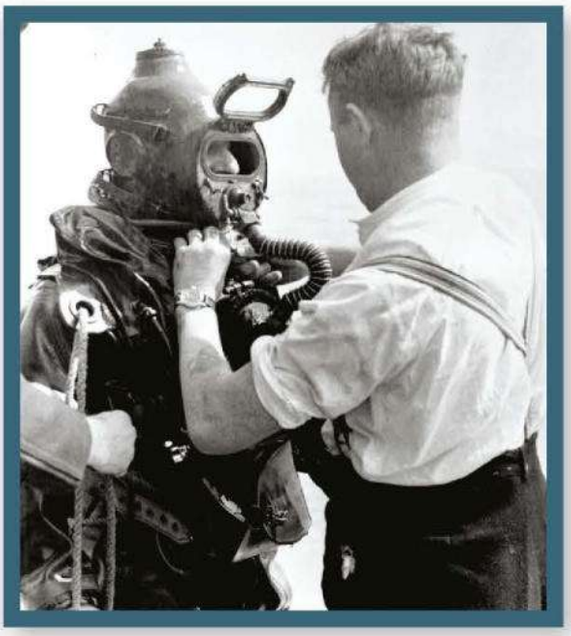
Joseph Force Crater

In 1930, Joseph Force Crater was appointed as a judge to the Supreme Court. However, a few short months later on the eve of 6 August, after having met two friends for dinner, he vanished off the face of the earth. His wife finally sounded the alarm when he did not return to their home in Maine after ten days. The story quickly captured the public imagination, and stories of the judge's mysterious behaviour in the days beforehand only added fuel to the fire.

Harold Holt



Surely one of the most high-profile historical disappearances is that of Australian prime minister Harold Holt, who disappeared having entered the water at Cheviot Beach in Victoria on 17 December 1967. To this day Holt's body has never been recovered. While some claim that the circumstances surrounding the prime minister's disappearance were unusual – and conspiracy theories emerged – it is likely that he drowned during a freak accident.



ABOVE-LEFT
Lionel Crabb recounts some of his adventures for a group of schoolboys when hunting for a Spanish galleon in Tobermory

ABOVE-MIDDLE
After the war Crabb worked as a freelance diver. Here he prepares to investigate an object off the coast of Hastings in 1953

ABOVE-RIGHT
The Sverdlov, the ship Lionel Crabb and Sydney Knowles were reported to have spied on in 1955

After the submarine Truculent collided with the Swedish tanker Divinia in the River Thames on 12 January 1950, Crabb participated in the investigatory missions. Similarly, he assisted in another recovery operation four years later when the submarine HMS Affray was lost in the English Channel on 16 April 1951.

But while these very high-profile dives were the ones the public were allowed to read about, Crabb also participated in more clandestine operations. In 1955 he was contacted by the British Intelligence Services and asked to undertake a mission diving beneath the Russian ship, the Sverdlov, which was docked in Portsmouth Harbour. Both the British Navy and the American CIA were interested in why the Sverdlov was so manoeuvrable. The operation was overseen by the CIA and Crabb and Sydney Knowles, a friend from Gibraltar, completed the job successfully. But a year later Crabb would find himself enlisted for another mission into the murky waters of Portsmouth Harbour, one from which he would never return.

LOST AT SEA

On 18 April 1956, the Soviet leaders Marshal Bulganin and Nikita Khrushchev arrived in Portsmouth for a rare goodwill visit during a brief relaxing of tensions in the Cold War. Flanked by a pair of warships, their cruiser the Ordzhonikidze greatly interested the British intelligence services. The Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, also known as MI6) immediately hatched a plan to send a diver below the Ordzhonikidze on a reconnaissance mission. But the waters of Portsmouth Harbour were a dangerous place to dive, with little visibility combined with the hazard of ships entering and exiting the busy port. For this job, they needed an experienced man, but who?

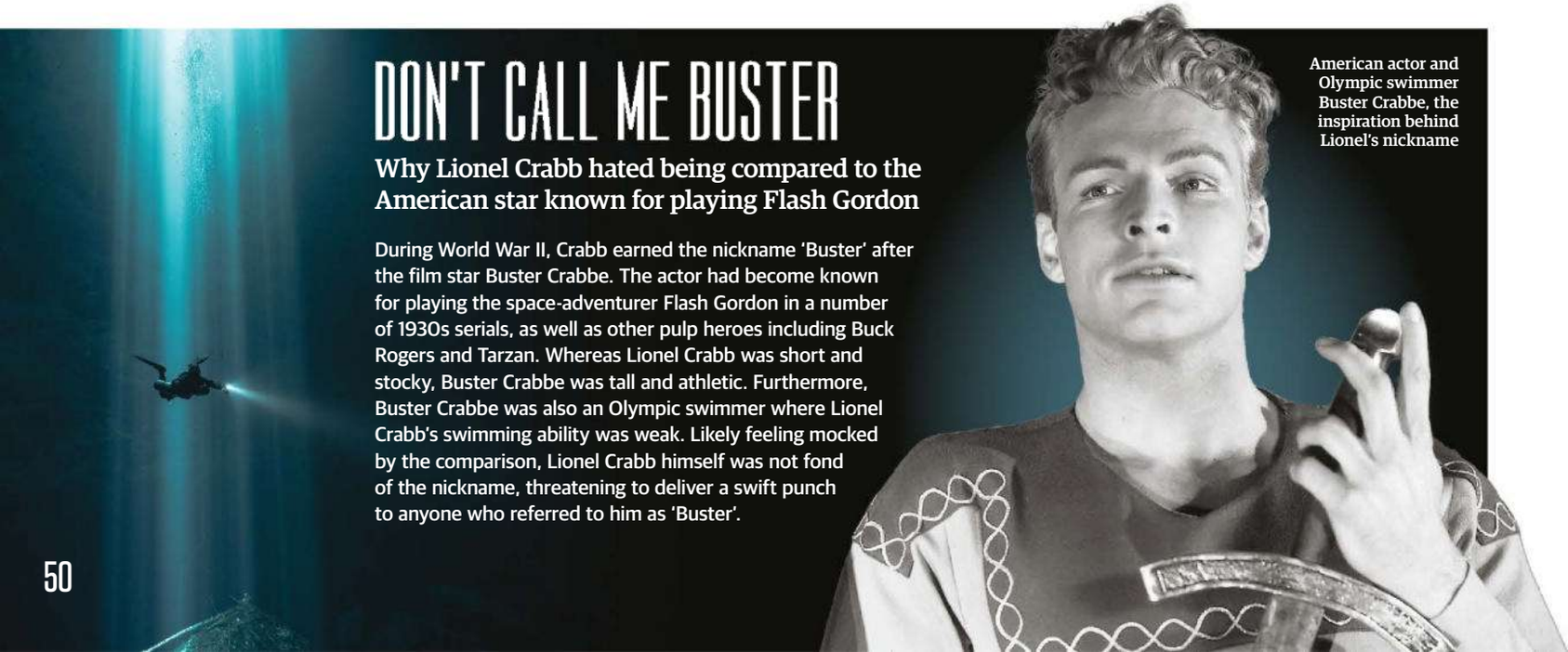
Lionel Crabb had recently turned 47. While still a highly respected war hero, in many ways his best years were behind him. His health was poor and he drank and smoked to excess. Nonetheless, perhaps seeking to relive his glory days, Crabb eagerly agreed to the job and arrived at Portsmouth on 17 April. After contacting an ex-colleague from the war to act as a diving partner, the pair carried out a test dive on the 18th. However, Professor Christopher R Moran states in his book *Classified: Secrecy And The State In Modern Britain* that Crabb followed this with a heavy drinking spree in nearby Havant. Showing little respect for the secrecy of the operation, Crabb is said to have informed several locals of his plans and others recognised his distinctive crab-handled sword stick.

The next morning, just before 7am, Crabb embarked on his mission. He returned just once to adjust his weights. With enough oxygen to last him 90 minutes, by 9.15, it was clear that Crabb was not coming back. At some point before 8am the crew of one of the Russian warships, the Sovershenny, saw a diver surface, clearly in great distress. Interestingly, the admiral who reported this story, Rear Admiral V F Kotov, claimed that this had occurred on the 18th and not the 19th. Made directly to the British

DON'T CALL ME BUSTER

Why Lionel Crabb hated being compared to the American star known for playing Flash Gordon

During World War II, Crabb earned the nickname 'Buster' after the film star Buster Crabbe. The actor had become known for playing the space-adventurer Flash Gordon in a number of 1930s serials, as well as other pulp heroes including Buck Rogers and Tarzan. Whereas Lionel Crabb was short and stocky, Buster Crabbe was tall and athletic. Furthermore, Buster Crabbe was also an Olympic swimmer where Lionel Crabb's swimming ability was weak. Likely feeling mocked by the comparison, Lionel Crabb himself was not fond of the nickname, threatening to deliver a swift punch to anyone who referred to him as 'Buster'.



American actor and Olympic swimmer Buster Crabbe, the inspiration behind Lionel's nickname

ABOVE The Davis Submarine Escape Apparatus, used by the Underwater Working Party in Gibraltar, is tested in 1942

"WITH THE RELEVANT FILES STILL UNDER EMBARGO, IT'S LIKELY THAT THERE IS STILL MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT THE CRABB AFFAIR"

prime minister, Anthony Eden, at a state dinner, it's likely that this claim was a less-than-subtle hint of Russian knowledge of the operation. The only problem was, that while the Russians had been aware of it, the British prime minister had not.

In the corridors of Whitehall, tensions were high. Anthony Eden was furious as he had made it clear that no intelligence operations were to be carried out during the Russians' visit. The fact that the mission had gone ahead without ministerial approval or knowledge only served to increase his anger. According to Gov.uk, even news of Crabb's disappearance was not immediately communicated to ministers as various intelligence departments desperately sought to pass blame. As a result of this embarrassment, the then head of the SIS known as 'C' retired. The circumstances surrounding Crabb's disappearance were kept secret, the public informed that the Lieutenant Commander had vanished while testing underwater apparatus in Portsmouth Harbour.

WHAT HAPPENED TO COMMANDER CRABB?

In June 1957, over a year after Crabb's disappearance, a body clothed in diving gear was discovered by a group of fishermen near Chichester Harbour in Sussex. Disturbingly, the body had no head and no hands but the local coroner was unable to determine whether these injuries were the cause of death or not. Although attempts to positively identify the discovered body proved inconclusive, an inquest declared that it was indeed Lionel Crabb and on 6 July, the body was laid to rest in Portsmouth.

Surely then, this was the end of the story? Lieutenant-Commander Crabb's remains had at last been found, even if the circumstances of his death remained a mystery. There was just one problem – very few people were convinced that the headless corpse buried in Portsmouth was Lionel Crabb. Neither Crabb's ex-wife nor his girlfriend could provide positive identification and the verdict seems to have been entirely based on Sydney Knowles' assertion that both Crabb and the body had a similar scar on the left knee.

There was also the mystery of what exactly happened that fateful morning. One theory is that Crabb's poor health and the previous night's binge affected him during the dive. If he ran into trouble, he may have been taken aboard the Ordzhonikidze where he simply died. Author Nigel West, the pen name for former British MP Rupert Allason, stated in *Spycraft Secrets: An Espionage A-Z* that the night before, Crabb suffered a minor heart attack but went ahead with the dive nonetheless. However, author MS Goodman in his 2008 paper, *A Cold War Cover Up: The Buster Crabbe Affair*, claimed that it was another officer with Crabb who suffered the heart attack.

Another theory is that he was caught and executed. When CIA officer Tennent H Bagley helped write the memoirs of KGB operative Sergey A Kondrashev, he was surprised when Kondrashev claimed prior awareness of Crabb's mission – suggesting a possible mole. What the KGB officer did with this information, and more importantly with Crabb, he did not reveal. In 2007 Eduard Koltsov, a Russian ex-frogman, claimed that he had been waiting for Crabb and, after catching him in the process of attaching what appeared to be a limpet mine to the Ordzhonikidze, cut his throat.

But others have been far less convinced of Crabb's demise, believing that he successfully defected or was taken by the Russian security services and brainwashed. The journalist Bernard Hutton believed that Crabb had defected and was now an officer in the Soviet Navy. Hutton even had a photograph of the man he believed to be Lionel Crabb. However, author Don Hale, while acknowledging that some family members believed this tale, states that "few others did".

With the relevant files still under embargo, it's likely that there is still much to learn about the Crabb affair. Recently, historian Giles Milton explored the mystery in the first series of his podcast *Cover Up*. In one episode fellow historian Andrew Lownie claimed that Lord Mountbatten, as head of the Navy, must have had knowledge of the operation. Is this the reason for the extraordinary secrecy? Perhaps we will never know. Meanwhile, the files continue to sit in the National Archives, their contents waiting to be revealed. However, Crabb deserves to be remembered for more than just his disappearance, but rather for his past as a war hero, an expert diver, and a one of a kind. There'll never be another Lionel "Buster" Crabb.

BELOW The 1958 film *The Silent Enemy* featured a dramatisation of Crabb and his team's dive to recover important documents from General Sikorski's crashed plane

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Abelard & Héloïse

A Medieval Love Story

How the correspondence between two lovers preserved their place in history as romantic icons

Written by Emily Staniforth

EXPERT BIO

CONSTANT J MEWS

Constant J Mews is a professor of medieval religious history and thought, and director of the Centre for Religious Studies at Monash University in Melbourne. He is the author of *The Lost Love Letters Of Heloise And Abelard: Perceptions Of Dialogue In Twelfth-Century France* (Macmillan, 1999).

Once upon a time in medieval Paris, a man and a woman met and fell madly in love. Their names were Peter Abelard and Héloïse: two intellectuals whose relationship, though ill-fated, has inspired and fascinated people through the ages. But how do we know their story, and why are they remembered with such veneration? The simple answer is that the pair wrote a series of remarkable letters to one another in their later lives, recounting the story of how they met and discussing their relationship as well as matters of philosophy and religion. These letters have been preserved and studied since they were first discovered around 100 years after their deaths, and have provided an incredible insight into a loving, if doomed, relationship from the medieval period.

"We abandoned ourselves entirely to love"

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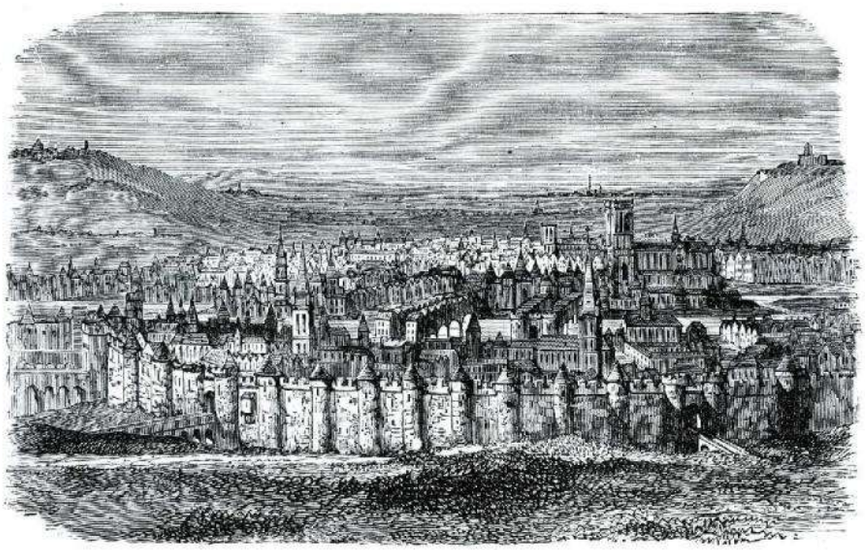
AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

In 1115, Peter Abelard was hired to tutor the young Héloïse by her uncle and guardian Fulbert, a canon at the Cathedral of Notre Dame. "We do know that Abelard was a teacher and like any other teacher of his day he was a cleric. He was a very brilliant, argumentative figure and he would have been probably in his mid 30s when he met Héloïse," says Constant J Mews, a professor of medieval religious history and thought at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. "There's a little bit of argument about the age of Héloïse but my judgement would be that she was probably about 20 or 21 when she met Abelard. There are some people that have a custom of imagining her to be very young. She had been brought up at the convent of Argenteuil but she was not technically a nun: she was living as a boarder."

Héloïse lived a privileged life for a young woman of the time and her uncle's position in the Church meant she had access to the finest education available in Paris. Highly intelligent, she was fluent in Latin, Hebrew and Greek. While it was common for women of Héloïse's status to be educated, it would never be assumed that they would pursue a career as an intellectual in the same way that a man might. Héloïse lived in one of the houses in the cathedral area of Paris, and it is likely that it was during her time here that she first noticed Abelard. When a tutor needed to be hired, Abelard was the candidate of Héloïse's choosing according to her own account of the time. "All that we know is that she insisted on getting him as a tutor, so she already must have spotted Abelard teaching in the cathedral cloister just next door to the Cathedral of Notre Dame," explains Mews. "She must have been a pretty persuasive young lady because she got her uncle not only to get him as her tutor, but what's more astonishing is that she persuaded the uncle to give Abelard board and lodging in the house, which was obviously dynamite. She was very excited and the relationship began there."

It is clear to see that the pair loved each other a great deal. In an autobiographical account, Abelard writes to his friend and recounts his remembrance of their affair. In one particularly expressive passage he wrote of their time together: "We were united first under one roof, then in heart, and so with our lessons providing the opportunity we abandoned ourselves entirely to love. Her studies allowed us the private seclusion that love desired and then, with our books open before us, more words of love than of our reading passed between us, and more kissing than ideas." Héloïse, in return, wrote of her love for Abelard: "God knows I never sought anything in you except yourself; I wanted simply you, nothing of yours."

BELOW The couple met and started their romantic affair in Paris in the early 12th century



There is no doubt over the physical nature of Abelard and Héloïse's relationship as it was not long after their affair had begun that Héloïse found herself pregnant with Abelard's child. In order to protect Héloïse from the judgement of public opinion and the fury of her uncle Fulbert, Abelard sent his lover to his hometown in Brittany to be cared for by his sister Denise. In Brittany, Héloïse gave birth to a son whom she named Astrolabe. It is not known with any certainty what happened to Astrolabe in his later life, but as an infant he was brought up by Denise after Héloïse returned to Paris.

Fulbert was enraged by Héloïse's disappearance from Paris and so Abelard came up with, what he believed to be, a solution to the predicament the pair found themselves in. To try and placate Fulbert and legitimise their child, Abelard intended to marry Héloïse. However, Héloïse had no similar intentions. It is hard to believe that Héloïse would have been so opposed to marriage considering the social expectations of the women of her time, but her words and thoughts about Abelard's marriage proposal are laid out in a letter she wrote to him years after the event. She stated: "I looked for no marriage bond, no wedding present; it was not my pleasures I sought to gratify, as you know, but yours. The name of wife may seem holier or more valid, but sweeter for me will

"It would seem to me dearer and more honourable to be called not his empress but your mistress"

always be the word friend or, if you will permit me, concubine or whore. But you kept silent about many of my arguments for preferring love to marriage and freedom to a chain, God is my witness that if Augustus, emperor of the whole world, thought fit to honour me with marriage, and conferred all the earth on me to possess forever, it would seem to me dearer and more honourable to be called not his empress but your mistress."

Eventually, Héloïse gave in to Abelard's request and the pair united in reluctant matrimony. This union in itself displays the extent to which the lovers cared for each other: Abelard's willingness to marry Héloïse to save her reputation jeopardised his career, and Héloïse agreeing to marriage, despite her strong opposition to the idea, showed her desire to appease Abelard. The condition on which Héloïse submitted to the marriage was that it should remain a secret. "Making the marriage public would have been the death of a career for Abelard," explains Mews. "He would not have been able to get any senior promotion. He's technically not yet a priest, but any sense of future advancement would have been stopped by that." After the marriage had taken place, Abelard entreated Héloïse to move to a nunnery in Argenteuil to protect her from the anger of her uncle.

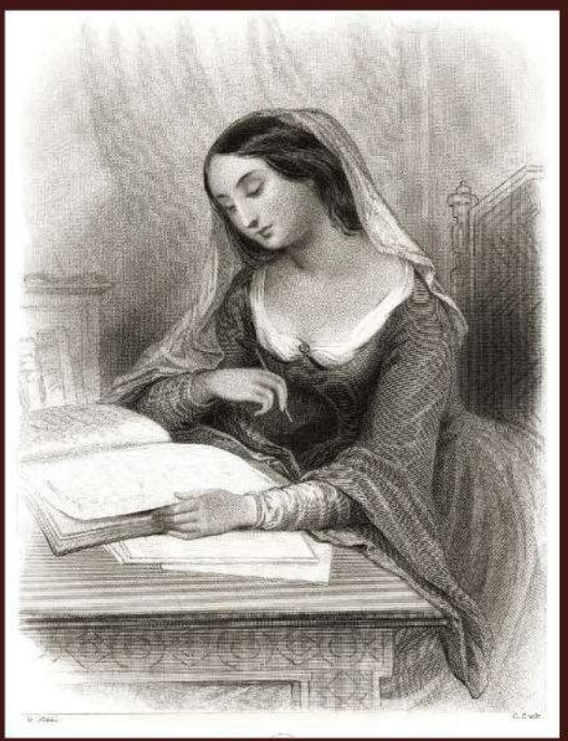
Unfortunately, though Héloïse was spared the abuse of Fulbert, Abelard experienced the full force of his wrath. In Abelard's account of what came next he described how an assassin, hired by Fulbert to enact his revenge, attacked him in the night with a razor, castrating him in retribution for his indiscretions with Héloïse. No longer able to engage in an intimate physical relationship after the loss of his 'manhood', Abelard effectively ordered Héloïse, who was still residing at the Argenteuil convent, to live the rest of her life as a nun. Surprisingly, given Héloïse's

LEFT Abelard was initially employed as Héloïse's tutor

BELOW Héloïse's uncle Fulbert was displeased with the couple's romantic relationship

An Enlightening Discovery

Are there more letters between Abelard and Héloïse?



In the 1970s, a group of 113 letters were discovered by a German scholar. These letters recorded correspondence between a man and a woman and dated from the 1100s. After studying the letters, Professor Mews has attributed their authorship to Abelard and Héloïse. But how did he come to this conclusion?

The editing of the letters revealed that the two writers were a famous teacher and a brilliant female student of philosophy. Upon looking closer at the vocabulary used by the correspondents, Mews identified the voices of the lovers.

"The first trigger was a single word and the word was, in English, 'knowability'. It was a word that didn't exist before [Abelard first used it]," explains Mews. "I was able to check and it was clear to me that nobody had used this word before him. Now, when Abelard spoke about 'knowability' he was talking about an abstract noun and something being 'knowable'. He had invented a word to get this very abstract point across."

Mews also found that some of the themes discussed in the letters were characteristic of the writings and philosophies of the pair, and that the female author's professions of the purity of true love echoed the ideology of Héloïse. These letters, believed to have been written while the pair were still together, provided a groundbreaking insight into both the notorious affair and the characters and capabilities of both Abelard and Héloïse as scholars.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

An Enduring Legacy

How the tale of Abelard and Héloïse has achieved an almost legendary status

Peter Abelard died in 1142. His remains were taken to the Paraclete where Héloïse had them buried. When she died in around 1163, she was buried next to her husband. There is some dispute over what happened to the lovers' bodies next but it is believed that they were moved at least once and now rest in the famous Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. "At the time of the French Revolution they were the only people from the Middle Ages whose bodies were allowed to go into the cemetery of Père Lachaise where they are still buried. They were seen as secular saints, and no one else got into that category," says Mews.

Though their respective legacies as writers, philosophers and theologians remain highly influential, the often fictionalised romantic aspects of Abelard and Héloïse's lives are arguably more powerful. Having reached an almost mythical status in the minds of their admirers and readers, they became akin to the fictional Romeo and Juliet in their association with the theme of tragic love. Since the 1700s, the love of Abelard and Héloïse has inspired works of art, novels, music, poems, plays and films and their position as romantic icons continues to see devotees visit their tomb, leaving letters and mementos.

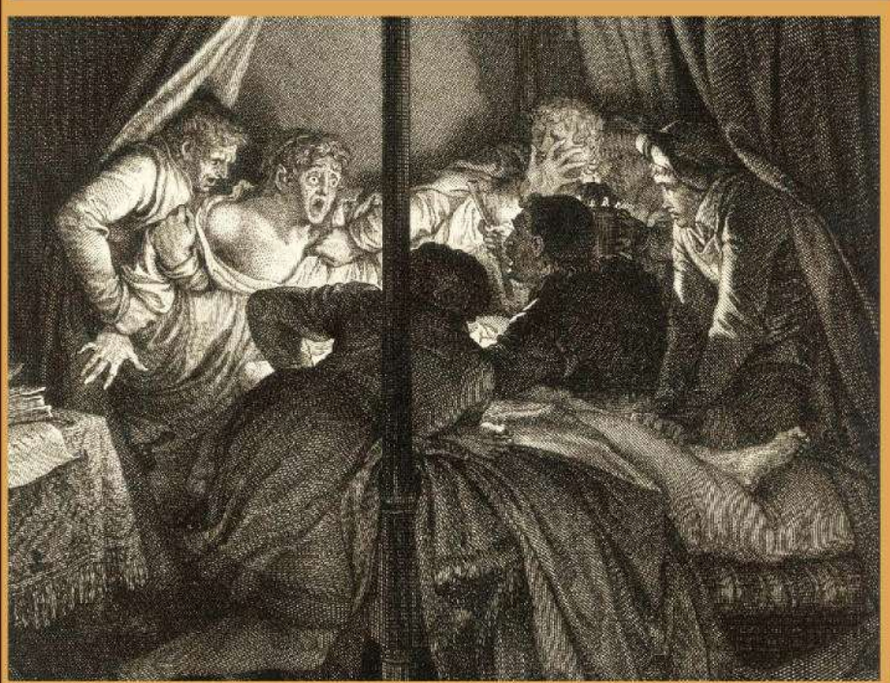
"It is due to Héloïse's forward thinking that the famous letters between her and her husband still survive"

strong-willed nature, she obeyed his wishes. Abelard himself joined a cloister and dedicated himself to God. They were never involved with each other again in a romantic capacity, but even a religious life could not keep them apart.

The Letters

The famous letters that survive and tell the tale of Abelard and Héloïse's affair are the main source for historians investigating the lives of the couple. These letters were, however, not written during their time together but were produced after they had each entered religious life and had left their physical romantic relationship behind. Abelard and Héloïse's correspondence with each other recounted their lives together but also mused on questions of philosophy and religion. Mews argues that there also survives another collection of over 100 letters between them, written at the time of their affair. The letters confirm that Abelard's success as a philosopher made him a hugely prominent figure, that he discussed many of his ideas with Héloïse, and was influenced by her opinions on ethical issues. Abelard has been classed by historians as the greatest thinker of the 12th century, with his skills as a logician and theologian particularly praised.

Héloïse also pursued her intellectual studies while rising through the ranks at the nunnery. Eventually she became prioress of the convent at Argenteuil before she moved to the Abbey of the Paraclete in northern France. The Paraclete had been established by Abelard in around 1122 and when Héloïse found herself without a station in 1129, Abelard gifted her the monastery. She assumed the position of abbess at the new nunnery at the Paraclete, and it was here that she spent the rest of her life. Utilising her exemplary education, Héloïse wrote extensively on the themes of love, friendship and marriage while helping to teach those around her. She was highly respected by those in the



BELOW Fulbert had Abelard castrated in retribution for his relationship with Héloïse

religious community and was instrumental in establishing several abbeys around Paris.

When reading the letters of Abelard and Héloïse, it is almost shocking to see Héloïse, a practising and high-ranking nun, lay out her thoughts and beliefs about her past life with Abelard in black and white. By the time the pair started writing to one another, Abelard appears to have come to believe that his castration was a punishment from God for his affair with Héloïse. Héloïse, on the other hand, has no such regrets.

"Abelard writes a long account of his life, which is really the source of most of what we know about him and Héloïse, and in his telling of the story he really wants to get across that he made a mistake and that the castration was divine: the ordained punishment ultimately for the good. And so he plays up his behaviour as being that of a playboy who was proud and arrogant who ultimately got what he deserved," says Mews. "I think Héloïse was pretty upset when she read this account because Abelard was saying: 'I thought it was rather fun, but in the end, it was an affair of the flesh.' Héloïse insists that their intentions were always pure and what is so remarkable is that she has a set of values about the priority of love over any form of personal satisfaction. This was an ideal of friendship (normally friendship was between people of the same sex) and she insists that her intentions were always noble, and she was never pursuing this affair out of sexual indulgence, which was the story that Abelard was giving. This tension in which Héloïse accuses Abelard of fudging the past, of not being true to the values which she thought they were sharing, is something which gives an incredible energy and dynamism to the letters."

Héloïse never repented her relationship with Abelard, citing that she still loved and desired him and had gone into the religious order for him and not for God. She did not believe she was responsible for Abelard's punishment when he was castrated though, because her intentions in their relationship, if not her actions, had always been pure: a running theme throughout her philosophical and theological musings.

Preserving Love

It is due to Héloïse's forward thinking that the famous letters between her and her husband still survive. As their correspondence provided some context to the foundation of the religious community at the Paraclete, it is presumed that Héloïse viewed them as of historic importance. Therefore, she made sure that they would be kept safe.

"It looks as if Héloïse kept these letters at the women's convent, but they were very vulnerable, and so one of her successors may have put these documents for safekeeping in the Cathedral of Notre Dame," explains Mews. "It is there that they were discovered in the mid 13th century. So these letters survive, I think certainly because Héloïse wanted them to provide a foundation story for her community, but women's communities are notoriously vulnerable to war and destruction and in fact this is what happened. Thank goodness that she had, or someone had, put the letters into safekeeping. But we've got a situation where most of the manuscripts of the Paraclete are lost. So in a sense it's just really good luck and forethought that we have the account and, of course, they were probably preserved initially because of the rules of the Paraclete. [The letters] conclude with a set of rules for the nuns and that was the official reason for keeping these documents."

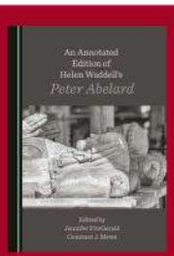
Interest in the letters and love story of Abelard and Héloïse first peaked in the 16th and 17th centuries when copies of the correspondence were printed. During this period, the main focus tended to be on Abelard, who had come into conflict with the Church in his later life and had been condemned as a heretic. In the 18th century, however, renewed interest in the letters from the salons of aristocratic women that had begun to emerge led to a more appreciative view of Héloïse's talent and importance as a philosopher and writer. "There was such an explosion of interest in the late 17th and early 18th century, that Héloïse became a famous goddess of fiction. The letters were being read, often by women who were not interested in Abelard's theology. They saw her as a great tragic figure," says Mews.

The tale of Abelard and Héloïse has been kept alive since their deaths through their own words. The love the pair felt for each other is evident, not only by their own accounts but in the very act of writing to each other long after their physical relationship had ended. In many ways, the steadfast friendship they maintained while living celibate and cloistered existences is more extraordinary than the passionate affair for which they are famous. Theirs was a true meeting of their minds, and in the preservation of their letters they have provided an invaluable and electrifying glimpse into the medieval world of love and friendship like no one else.

TOP A depiction of Abelard and Héloïse in their religious lives

ABOVE *The Parting Of Abelard And Héloïse* by Angelika Kauffmann

BELOW The tomb of Abelard and Heloise, Pere Lachaise Cemetery, Paris



AN ANNOTATED EDITION OF HELEN WADDELL'S PETER ABELARD (CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING, 2022), EDITED BY CONSTANT J MEWS AND JENNIFER FITZGERALD, IS AVAILABLE TO BUY NOW. WADDELL'S HISTORICAL NOVEL WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN 1933.

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ABOVE The use of torture on those held by the Inquisition was allowed as without confessing their sins the accused could not be welcomed back into the church

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INQUISITION IN THE NEW WORLD

The colonies of the New World presented a new front in the Inquisition's war against heresy

Written by Ben Gazur

Christopher Columbus noted a strange historical coincidence in his diary. "In the same month in which their Majesties issued the edict that all Jews should be driven out of the kingdom and the territories, they gave me the order to undertake, with sufficient men, my expedition of discovery to the Indies."

When Columbus crossed the Atlantic it opened new continents for exploration and discovery. It was as if a whole new world had opened up. As well as exploration, however, the arrival of European powers in America offered chances for exploitation. The new lands that were discovered were already inhabited by millions of people who did not yet know that they were to become the next front in the expansion of Christianity. Europeans, like the expelled Jews of Spain, also moved to the New World.

In the wake of European colonisation came Christian monks, priests and, to ensure doctrinal purity, the Inquisition. ▶

Coming of the Inquisition

Inquisitions had often been used in Europe as a way of detecting heretics who held beliefs different to those of the Catholic faith. Over the centuries Inquisitions had been created by the papacy to investigate multiple heretical movements, but once the Protestant Reformation began in the 16th century the scope and intensity of Inquisitional investigations ballooned.

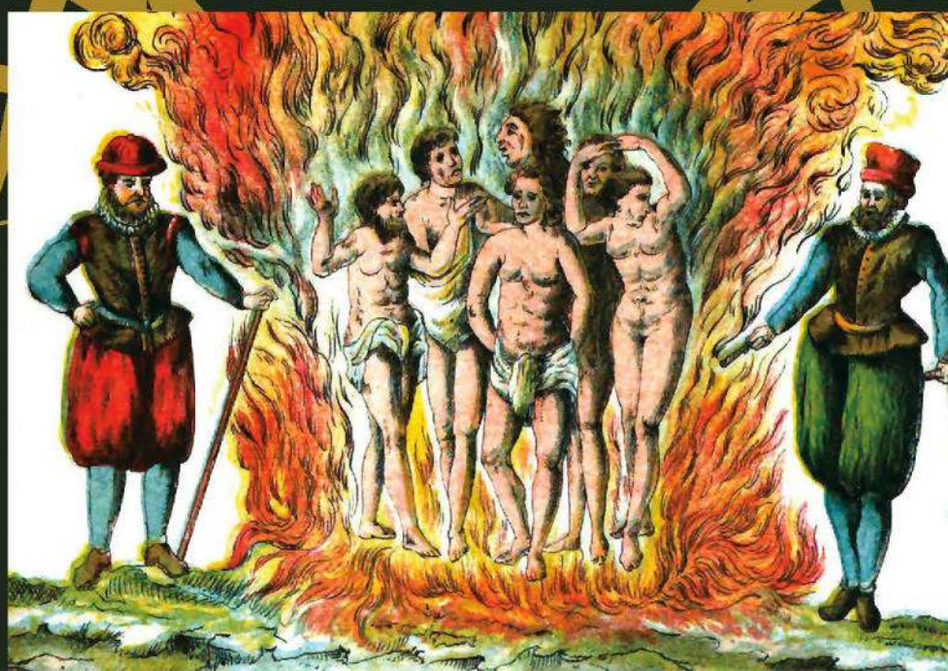
The Spanish Inquisition, known as the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, was a unique institution. While other Inquisitions were under the control of the Pope and bishops, the Spanish Inquisition created in 1478 was given over to Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile. These married monarchs ruled the kingdoms from which Spain would be created and argued that they needed their own Inquisition because of the special circumstances of their domains.

For centuries the Iberian Peninsula had been dominated by Muslim states. Al-Andalus, as Moorish-ruled Spain was known, had provided home to millions of Muslims and toleration to Jews and Christians. Learning flourished in many of the cities and Christians from the rest of Europe often studied there to gain access to works unavailable elsewhere. This was not a state of affairs that pleased the rulers of Europe. Where there was freedom of thought there was heresy.

Ferdinand and Isabella led a reconquest of Iberia known as the *Reconquista*. As lands fell under their dominion they found they were now ruling large populations of non-Christians, and they encouraged Jewish and Muslim inhabitants to convert. Many did. These Conversos and Moriscos, as the Jewish and Muslim converts were known respectively, were freed from direct repression but not from suspicion. It was widely believed that they clung to their old religions in secret and so represented a threat to the Catholic state. There seems to have been some truth in this, at least if the findings of the Inquisition are to be believed. The main role of the Inquisition was to examine the beliefs and actions of converts and uncover those who were Catholic in name only.

In 1492, just as Columbus was setting out on his voyage, Ferdinand and Isabella issued the Alhambra Decree that gave all practising Jews in their domains four months to leave, a decree that would only formally be rescinded in 1968. The reason given for their expulsion was that active Jewish worship was tempting Conversos to fall back into their old faith. That same year, with the discovery of the New

"This was not a state of affairs that pleased the rulers of Europe. Where there was freedom of thought there was heresy"



TOP Inquisitors would press the accused to confess all their crimes, with the accused not knowing what evidence the Inquisition had against them

ABOVE The discoveries of Columbus gave huge opportunities for expansion by the rulers of the Spanish kingdoms

RIGHT The Spanish treatment of the native people sparked controversy, as in this French illustration of them being burned alive

World, the lands of the Spanish monarchs suddenly expanded to include new and more varied threats to their dreams of a pure and Catholic world.

New Worlds and New Faiths

In 1493 Pope Alexander VI issued the papal bull *Inter Caetera* that divided the New World between Spain and Portugal. Further bulls gave the monarchs rights to convert the native peoples of the new lands that were discovered.

The Inquisition came early to the new Spanish holdings. In 1522 a Dominican friar, Bartolome de las Casas, petitioned the king of Spain to "send the Holy Inquisition to those islands of the Indies, of which I believe there is a very great need, because where the faith has newly been planted, as it has in those lands, perhaps there will be no one who causes the trouble of heresy, but already there they have found and have burned two heretics, and by fortune they kept more than 14 from entering these lands." It was leaders of the monastic orders who led the first attempts to convert the local population in the New World. This was sometimes disastrous.

In an attempt to Christianise the population the sons of local nobility were removed from their families to be educated in Christianity by the monks. When they were returned to their homes they were expected to reveal if any in their towns were returning to their old pagan ways. This led to hostility and even murder of the sons by families who feared they were spies.

De las Casas, who had called for the Inquisition to come to the New World, would become one of the most vocal defenders of native rights. In 1550 he took part in the Valladolid debate in Spain where he argued that the populations already living in the new lands should be respected and were equals in human dignity with their Spanish overlords. Others argued that nations who conducted human sacrifice and worshipped strange gods should be subdued with the harshest of measures. The Inquisition was one of the weapons to be used against them.

The Inquisition in New Spain was formally founded by King Philip II in 1596; before this, bishops in the region had the task of holding trials.

Fray Diego de Landa, Bishop of Yucatan, had tried converting the Maya and launched his own Inquisition in 1562 that saw huge numbers of Mayan texts and religious images destroyed in the name of ridding the Indigenous people of idolatry. Many Maya chose suicide rather than face de Landa's torture. Carlos Ometochtzin, a member of the native nobility of Mexico, was burned at the stake by Bishop Juan de Zumarraga, who held the title of Protector of the Indians, for refusing to give up the religion of his ancestors. These actions caused such an outcry that professional Inquisitors were called for in hopes of keeping peace in the new Catholic dominions.

King Philip II had no doubts about what the Inquisition should do. In a letter of 1565 he wrote: "As to the Inquisition, my will is that it be enforced by the Inquisitors as of old, and as is required by all law, human and divine. This lies very near my heart, and I require you to carry out my orders. Let all prisoners be put to death, and suffer them no longer to escape through the neglect, weakness, and bad faith of the judges. If any are too timid to execute the edicts, I will replace them with men who have more heart and zeal."

Due to the distances involved the Inquisition in New Spain found itself acting more independently than Inquisitions in the Iberian peninsula.

Enemies and Heretics

Vast wealth and opportunities lured many Europeans to the New World. This influx of immigrants brought new threats, as the Spanish saw it, to Catholicism beyond the fear of the paganism of the native peoples.

Europe was riven by religious schism in the 16th century. The Reformation saw Protestants exploring new varieties of

Witches of Cartagena

The port city that was the front line of Inquisition actions

Of the 538 cases of witchcraft taken on by the Inquisition in the Americas, more than half of them were tried in Cartagena. The port city, founded in 1533 on top of a previous indigenous settlement named Calamari, was an important hub of Spanish trade. Precious metals such as silver and gold would be shipped from here back to Spain, which made it a popular target for pirates (including Francis Drake in 1586). It was also authorised as a slave port by Philip II in 1571 and the Inquisition, it seems, was keen to seek a connection between witchcraft and indigenous/enslaved people.

One such case was Paula de Eguiluz who faced several witchcraft trials in her lifetime. Paula was born into slavery and sold to a Cuban slave-owner in the early 1600s. In 1623 she was accused of witchcraft, murdering a newborn child and drinking its blood. She denied the charges, but after three months of interrogation (and likely torture) she confessed. However, she was not killed, instead receiving 200 lashes and exile from Cuba.

Paula de Eguiluz was a free woman two years after the trial concluded and moved to a community of free Black men and women, where she worked as a laundress and healer. However, she was accused of witchcraft once again in 1632, and this time she named others and accused the Inquisition itself of not protecting her from the devil. Those further accused claimed she was the ringleader and a third trial began even as the second was in progress. Finally in 1638 she was found guilty, although her sentence is unknown. We do know she lived, however, as a friar claimed she had reconciled with the church by 1649.

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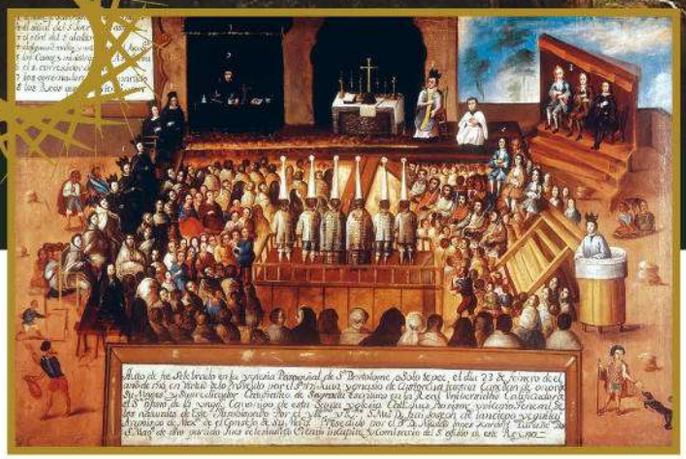


"PUNISHMENTS COULD RANGE FROM EXILE AND FINES, ALL THE WAY TO TORTURE"

Christianity, all of which were regarded as monstrous heresies by the Catholic church. Charles V, ruler of the Habsburg empire, had received many warnings in the 16th century that Protestants were travelling to his dominions in the New World to avoid persecution in their homelands.

While many Muslims had fled the *Reconquista* of Iberia to the Middle East, some populations of Spanish and Portuguese Jews travelled westward to the New World. Perhaps the most famous were the Jewish pirates of Jamaica who made their living by plundering the ships of those who had driven them from Europe.

The Inquisition was founded to investigate heresies that might sprout in the new ground of the New World. Its role was to stop the spread of Protestantism into Spanish territories and probe for apostasy among the Jews and Muslims who had converted to Catholicism. The Spanish remained obsessed with the idea of converted Jews, and their descendants, still practising their former religion. They developed a complex theory of *Limpieza de sangre* – purity of blood. Those 'tainted' with convert blood were popular targets for the Inquisition. Luis de Carvajal, a governor in Mexico, was sent to an Inquisition prison in 1588 after a trial which claimed he had entered the New World illegally. Decrees had banned those who had 'impure' blood from immigrating. In 1595 de Carvajal's nephew, also called Luis, was arrested by the Inquisition on charges of reverting to Judaism. He was burned, along with his mother and sisters, in Mexico City in 1596.

Under the Inquisition in New Spain you did have the right to a legal defence; an official trained in law was appointed from among the Inquisition's own officers. Unfortunately this lawyer was only allowed a limited amount of time with the suspect and was forbidden from revealing details of the case, such as what they were accused of, to their client. Anyone could make an accusation anonymously. The Inquisition could come for you whether you were lowly born and secretly accused by a neighbour or in a position of authority who might have political enemies. Governor Bernardo López de Mendizábal arrived in Sante Fe in 1659 and found himself under arrest by the Inquisition in 1662. His wife Teresa was also arrested and members of his household inspected. Bernardo died in prison but Teresa faced a trial where she was charged with 47 crimes. Although she successfully rebutted the accusations she was left penniless after the confiscation of her property

ABOVE By parading heretics in public the Inquisition sought to suppress impiety in those who witnessed the spectacle

ABOVE-INSET The operations of the Inquisition were kept secret, but its punishments were done in full view of the public, as in this *auto-da-fe* in Mexico

RIGHT A torture device now in the Inquisition Museum in Cartagena, Colombia

All images © Alamy, © Getty Images

and spent years attempting to recover it.

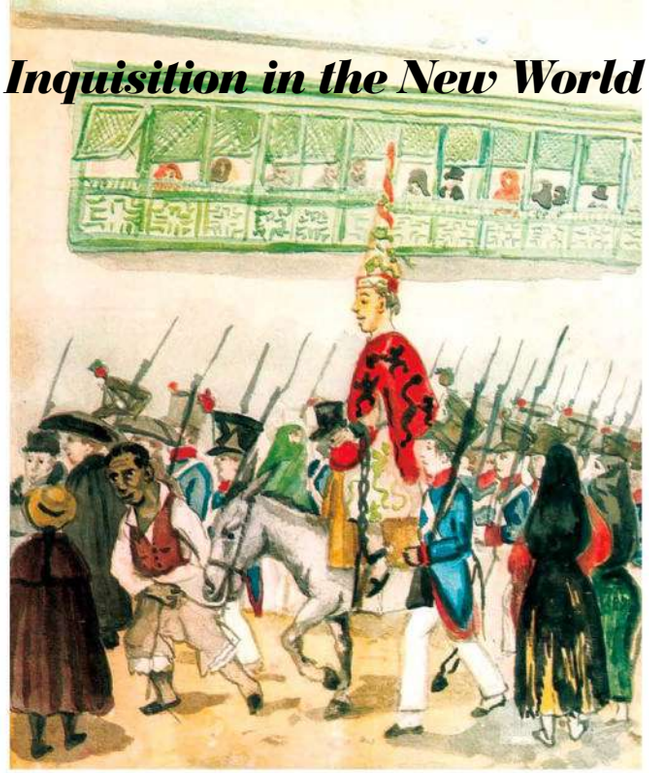
The likes of blasphemy, sodomy, and witchcraft could also see you defending yourself from Inquisition charges. Where there were different gods there was also a fear that these demonic figures could lead people, particularly women, into the practice of witchcraft. Maria de la Concepcion was put on trial by the Inquisition in 1668 in Mexico charged with enchanting a man to fall in love with another woman. Maria was elderly, Portuguese, and a Gypsy so was particularly vulnerable to accusations. She was found guilty, publicly humiliated, and whipped 200 times for her crimes.

Acts of Faith

The most spectacular manifestation of the Inquisition were the *autos-da-fe*. These were large public meetings where those accused of crimes to the Inquisition were brought out, in costumes known as *sanbenito* that depicted their crimes, to do penance and admit their sins for the world to see. Punishments were doled out so that the populace could witness the consequences of sin, heresy, and witchcraft. These could range from exile and fines, all the way to torture and burning at the stake.

At the great *auto-da-fe* of Mexico City in 1659 hundreds of the nobility rode in state through the streets. Stands for 16,000 spectators had been built. Those found guilty by the Inquisition were led forward, with effigies representing those who had died or fled. Those sentenced to be burned to death were placed on donkeys and paraded through the crowd to the place of execution. The lucky ones, those who repented after the sentence of death was passed, were granted the boon of being strangled before the fire was lit. As smoke billowed into the sky the punishments of other sinners were announced. Those who renounced their sin were welcomed back into the church with much joy, though they still had to do penance. Events like this occurred in Spanish domains from Peru to New Mexico.

The Inquisition was finally abolished in Mexico in 1820. Over the centuries it had tried crimes both religious and secular. In its last days it was used as a method of quelling those who called for Mexican independence. Though some historians have questioned whether the Inquisition was ever as truly dreadful as Protestant propagandists and popular culture would have us believe, the records of those caught in the Inquisition's grasp leave no doubt for what it was like when the Inquisition came knocking at your door.



ABOVE A drawing of an Inquisition prisoner being paraded through the streets

THE EXECUTION,
LIFE AND TIMES OF PATRICK O'DONNELL

HISTORY TELLS US THAT PATRICK O'DONNELL WAS HANGED IN NEWGATE PRISON IN DECEMBER 1883 FOR THE MURDER OF JAMES CAREY, THE INFAMOUS PHOENIX PARK KILLER AND NOTORIOUS IRISH INFORMER. HISTORY HOWEVER TELLS US ALMOST NOTHING OF AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE FOR AN IRISH PEASANT.

EXPLORE HIS LIFE AND TIMES THROUGH THIS UNIQUE WORK OF CREATIVE FICTION, ENTWINED WITH HISTORICAL FACT; FROM THE GREAT HUNGER TOTHE TYPHOID SHEDS OF QUEBEC; FROM HIS SERVICE IN THE CONFEDERATE ARMY TO THE O'DONNELL MASSACRE AT WIGGAN'S PATCH, PENNSYLVANIA; AND ULTIMATELY TO THAT FATEFUL DAY OFF THE COAST OF PORT ELIZABETH WHEN HE PUT THREE BULLETS INTO CAREY.

THE LAST DAYS OF THIS CONDEMNED MAN WERE SPENT RECORDING HIS LIFE IN A SERIES OF LETTERS WHICH REMAINED UNDISCOVERED FOR 133 YEARS RECENTLY UNCOVERED AND PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME HEREIN.

BRITISH AGENT, HERO OF IRELAND, OR SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER?

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Russian and Bulgarian troops fight a desperate battle to defend the Shipka Pass from repeated Ottoman attacks, August 1877

Image source: wiki/Military Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineers and Signal Corps

Greatest Battles

BATTLE OF SHIPKA PASS

SHIPKA, BULGARIA, JULY 1877 – JANUARY 1878

Written by Mark Simner

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 was fought between the Russian Empire (more correctly, an Eastern Orthodox coalition led by Russia, which included Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro) and the Ottoman Empire. It was the last, and most important, of a series of conflicts fought between the two empires dating back to the 17th century. Its causes are deep-rooted and complex, but the 1877 conflict began on 24 April, when the Russian Tsar, Alexander II, declared war on the Ottomans to come to the aid of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, who had begun a rebellion against Ottoman rule. It would end in a Russian coalition victory ten months later following a savage campaign that saw tens of thousands killed and countless more wounded. There were several sizeable actions fought during the conflict, one of

the most notable being the Battle of Shipka Pass, itself a series of bloody actions fought for control of the vital pass in the Balkan Mountains.

RUSSIAN STRATEGY

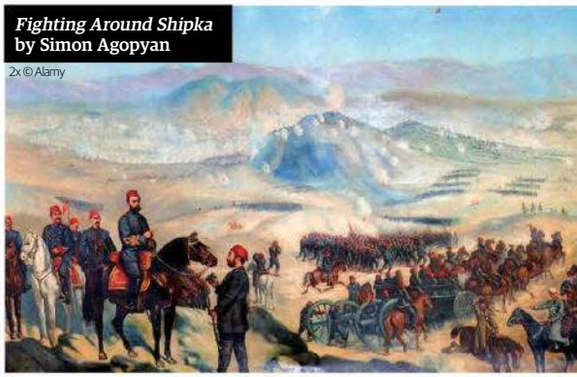
Bitter experience of earlier conflicts between the Russians and Ottomans had led to Turkey building a string of fortresses to guard its European provinces from future attacks. Nevertheless, Prussian-born Russian general Hans Karl von Diebitsch had managed to break through these formidable defences in 1829 and advance on Constantinople, allowing Russia to dictate subsequent peace terms. In 1877, Russian strategy was simply to repeat Diebitsch's earlier victory.

However, in 1877 Russia was unable to benefit from the naval supremacy it had enjoyed in the earlier campaign, which allowed unopposed amphibious operations and resupply by sea. This was because the Russian Black Sea fleet had scuttled itself at Sevastopol during the disastrous Crimean War, while the subsequent Treaty of Paris of 1856 restricted the number and size of vessels Russia could maintain in the Black Sea. Turkey, on the other hand, had built several modern ironclads that Russia could now not counter.

Russian strategy instead focused on marching an army of 250,000 men through Romania and cross the Danube – the natural border between Russian and Ottoman controlled territories – to avoid Ottoman defences. The Russian army would then advance over the Balkan Mountains to Adrianople, from where it would finally march on Constantinople and again force terms on the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, another force would launch a diversionary offensive in the Caucasus to draw off Ottoman troops that might otherwise meet the main Russian thrust towards the Ottoman capital. Alexander knew he needed a quick victory before the Great Powers of Europe could intervene.

OTTOMAN FORCES

At the start of the campaign, the Russian Army of the South was organised into four corps, each comprising two infantry and one cavalry divisions with supporting artillery. There is some debate as to the strength of their Ottoman opponents. At the time, Russia estimated that Turkey held around 160,000 troops in Europe, of which 60,000 were at Vidin on the Danube and the remaining 100,000 concentrated around Rushchuk, Silistria, Varna and



Fighting Around Shipka by Simon Agopyan

2x © Alamy

The scene after the taking of the Shipka Pass by Russian troops in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878

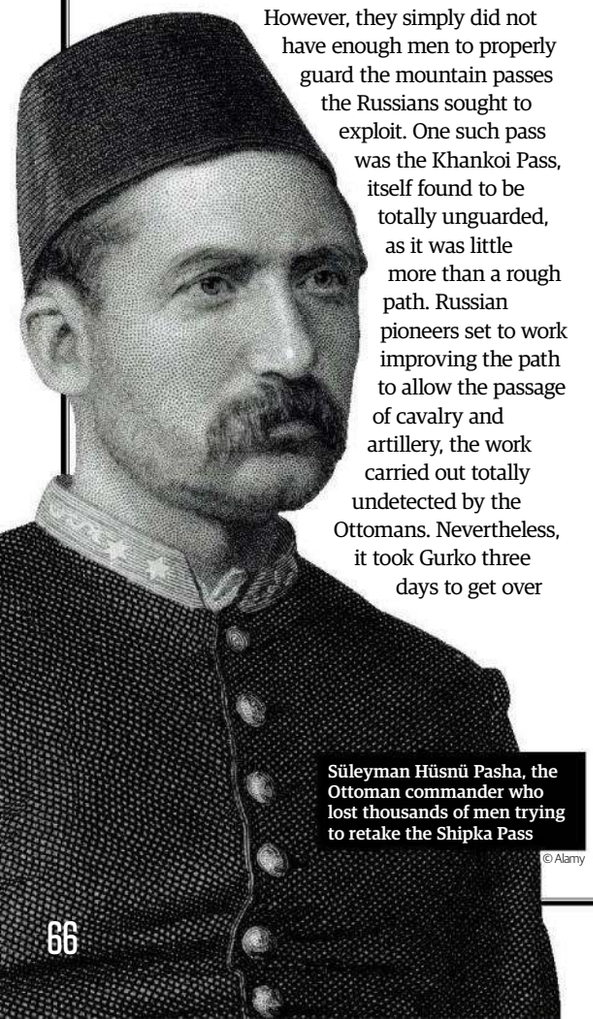
Shumla. Historians believe the number of Ottoman troops available to oppose the Russian invasion was higher, estimates ranging from 186,000 to over 250,000, although many would be garrisoning forts and not available for field operations.

Unlike Russia, however, the Ottomans do not appear to have had a strategy for the coming conflict, save for holding their static defensive line formed by the fortresses. The Ottoman high command suffered from internal rivalry, with commanders actively engaged in intrigues against one another. Even when the fighting commenced, these rivalries continued and undermined the Ottoman defence. Nevertheless, Ottoman troops would fight a determined and bloody campaign against the Russians.

THE RUSSIANS ADVANCE

Initially, the Russians successfully crossed the Danube into Bulgaria as planned, with all four corps over the river by 1 July, although they quickly began to deviate from their original strategy by adopting a broader, slower advance. Nevertheless, General Iosif Vladimirovich Gurko was ordered to race ahead of the main Russian army with 16,000 men – including the Fourth Rifle Brigade, the Bulgarian Legion, a half-battalion of dismounted Cossacks, and some artillery – and take possession of the strategically vital passes through the Balkan Mountains before Ottoman troops did the same.

The Russian advance came as a shock to the Ottomans, who scrambled to form a new line south of the Balkan Mountains. However, they simply did not have enough men to properly guard the mountain passes the Russians sought to exploit. One such pass was the Khankoi Pass, itself found to be totally unguarded, as it was little more than a rough path. Russian pioneers set to work improving the path to allow the passage of cavalry and artillery, the work carried out totally undetected by the Ottomans. Nevertheless, it took Gurko three days to get over the pass, his infantrymen hauling the heavy guns up the steep slopes.



Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha, the Ottoman commander who lost thousands of men trying to retake the Shipka Pass

© Alamy

Once over the Khankoi Pass, Gurko's force advanced through the Tundja Valley. The Russians skirmished with Ottoman advance troops, causing some delay, but otherwise continued without meeting serious resistance. Soon, Gurko's men found themselves looking towards their prize – the Shipka Pass.

CAPTURE OF THE PASS

On 17 July, Prince Nikolay Svyatopolk-Mirsky, commander of the Russian Ninth Infantry Division, attacked Ottoman positions at Shipka Pass. Gurko was supposed to work in concert with Mirsky to take the pass but had not arrived on time due to his delay. Unwilling to wait, Mirsky sent forward 2,000 men of the 36th (Orlovski) Infantry Regiment, supported by Cossacks and artillery, but they were repulsed by an Ottoman force of 4,000 made up of regular infantrymen, irregular Bashi-Bazouks and artillery. When Gurko arrived the next day, he also attacked the pass with two infantry battalions supported by two companies of Cossacks. This second attack also failed. Russian casualties stood at 150 killed or wounded.

Nevertheless, the Ottoman defenders believed that more Russian troops would soon be arriving and that they would unlikely be able to hold the pass from another assault. On 19 July, Ottoman troops quietly withdrew from the pass. The Russians, who believed the Ottomans were considering their demands for surrender, only realised the defenders had retired when they sent forward pickets to probe Ottoman defences. Shipka Pass now fell to the Russians.

BATTLE BEGINS

The loss of Shipka Pass had come as another blow to the Ottomans and plans to retake it were quickly put in motion. This task fell to Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha, who had been recalled from Montenegro with an experienced army of 20,000 men. Elsewhere, the advance of the main Russian force had ground to a halt in the face of determined Ottoman resistance at Plevna in northern Bulgaria. The war had suddenly taken on a static nature and not the one of mobility envisioned by the Russians.

Meanwhile, Gurko had garrisoned the Shipka Pass with a Russian infantry regiment and a Bulgarian battalion, while he led the remainder of his force south towards the town of Kazanlak. It would be on the 29 July that some of Gurko's Bulgarian troops clashed with the advanced guard of Süleyman's force near Stara Zagora. Süleyman's veteran soldiers proved too much for the Bulgarians, who withdrew after sustaining heavy casualties. The Ottoman troops then burned Stara Zagora and reputedly murdered thousands of its Christian inhabitants. Gurko, realising he was heavily outnumbered, retired back through the Khankoi Pass but sent five Bulgarian battalions to reinforce the garrison at Shipka Pass.

It was now the turn of the Russians to defend the Shipka Pass, their garrison consisting of the Russian 36th Infantry Regiment, five battalions of the Bulgarian Legion, five companies of Cossacks, and 29 guns. In all around 7,500 men, mostly

Bulgarians. The defenders set about improving the old Ottoman defences, digging new trenches and building breastworks out of stone. They also buried explosives left behind by the original Ottoman garrison to blow up Ottoman troops as they advanced on the pass.

His army swelled to 38,000 men, Süleyman ordered an advance on the Shipka Pass on 21 August. The Ottoman troops climbed the rocky slopes leading to Mount St Nicholas where they came under a murderous fire from the muskets and artillery of the Bulgarian defenders above, inflicting grievous casualties. Nevertheless, Süleyman had managed to get one of his artillery batteries onto the Maly-Bedek Mountain, from where it fired onto the Russian and Bulgarian troops.

Ottoman troops again assaulted Mount St Nicholas, this time from the direction of the Demir-Tepe Mountain to the east. Again, they were met by withering musket and artillery fire which burned through the Ottoman ranks, causing yet more heavy casualties. As the desperate fight for Shipka Pass raged, the Russian 35th Infantry Regiment arrived to reinforce the defenders.

Little happened on 22 August, apart from some infrequent exchange of fire. However, on 23 August, Süleyman ordered a major assault. Attacking from three directions, the Ottomans again climbed the steep slopes only to be met by the same savage fire of the Russian and Bulgarian defenders as before. The Russians also set off the buried explosives, causing death and horrendous injuries among the attackers. Nevertheless, some of the Ottoman troops did reach the Russian trenches and bloody hand-to-hand fighting ensued, during which many Russian gunners were killed. A Russian bayonet charge of the 36th (Orlovski) Infantry Regiment eventually threw the Ottomans back down the slopes.

Again and again the Ottomans attacked, despite the murderous fire they faced each time. At one point, the Russians and Bulgarians ran so low on ammunition that they threw rocks and rolled down boulders upon their attackers. Some accounts even quote the corpses of Ottoman dead being picked up and thrown at the attackers. At 3.00pm, the Ottomans managed to overrun the central battery, forcing the defenders back.

Reinforcements came in the form of 200 mounted men of the Fourth Rifle Brigade, who retook the battery, after which the remainder of the brigade, commanded by Fyodor Radetsky, arrived. The Ottomans attacked yet again, and were yet again repulsed. Radetsky then ordered two of his battalions to capture the Bald Mountain, the Russians climbing the slopes to meet a hail of deadly fire from the Ottomans. During the assault, the leading Russian troops were virtually annihilated, and, after much heavy loss, the remainder retired.

The next day, the Russians again attacked the Bald Mountain, but they were unable to take it, although they did manage to dislodge the Ottomans holding Wooded Hill. On 26 August,

RUSSIANS

NIKOLAY SVYATOPOLK-MIRSKY

This prince and cavalry general graduated from the Page Corps and served in the Caucasus prior to his involvement in the Russo-Turkish War. Following Shipka Pass he was made the ataman of the Don Cossack Voiska and later was made a member of the State Council of Imperial Russia in 1898. In 1895 he also bought and repaired Mir Castle in Belarus.

IOSIF GURKO

The count and field marshal was born in Novgorod and joined the hussars of the Imperial Guard around the age of 18, becoming a captain at around 29, adjutant to the tsar at 32 and colonel at 33. By the Russo-Turkish War he was a major general and spearheaded the Russian invasion, securing three Balkan passes in the space of 16 days.

MIKHAIL SKOBELEV

Known as the 'White General' thanks to his preference for wearing a white uniform while riding a white horse, even as he was in the centre of the conflict with his men, Skobelev was commended for his inspiring leadership. Following the war he began engaging in a political career, advocating Russian nationalism, but he died from a heart attack in 1882.

OTTOMANS

MEHMED RAUF PASHA BIN ABDI PASHA

Prior to the war Rauf Pasha had served as military attaché in France, was aide-de-camp to Sultan Abdülaziz, appointed the governor of Crete (along with several other areas after that) before being made Minister of the Navy in 1875. Following the war with Russia he became governor of Edirne as well as advisor to the Second Army.

SÜLEYMAN HÜSNÜ PASHA

Having graduated military school, Süleyman Hüsnü served as an officer in what are now Serbia, Bosnia and Albania, followed by a role as major in Crete where he stood against a local rebellion. Following this he was promoted to mirliva or brigadier general and worked in the military schools. He was chief commander of the Balkan Peninsula forces in the war with Russia.

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01
Route of Russian advance
Russian strategy was to march an army of 250,000 men through Romania, cross the Danube – in order to avoid Ottoman fortresses – and seize the passes in the Balkan Mountains. From here, Russian forces would advance on Adrianople and Constantinople to force terms on the Ottomans.
02
Crossing of the Danube
The main Russian advance initially went well, with all four corps having crossed the Danube River into Bulgaria by 1 July 1877. However, they soon began to deviate from their original plan by adopting a more broad and slower advance than had been previously envisioned.
03
Gurko races ahead
General Gurko advances ahead of the main Russian force with 16,000 men to take possession of the vital passes through the Balkan Mountains. He takes the Khankoi [Hankoi] Pass but is delayed due to some skirmishes with Ottoman forces, which prevents him working in concert with Mirsky.
04
Prince Mirsky's advance
Prince Mirsky, commander of the Russian Ninth Infantry Division, advances on Shipka Pass and attacks it on 17 July without Gurko's assistance. However, the attack, carried out by 2,000 men of the 36th (Orlovski) Infantry Regiment, supported by Cossacks and artillery, fails to dislodge the Ottoman defenders.
05
Gurko attacks Shipka Pass
Gurko advances from the Khankoi Pass and finally arrives at the Shipka Pass on 18 July, immediately attacking it with two infantry battalions supported by two companies of Cossacks. The attack fails but the Ottoman defenders quietly abandon their positions the next day. Shipka Pass is then seized by the Russians.
ROUMANIA
BUKHAREST
Silistria
Rustchuk
DANUBE RIVER
Rahova
Nikopol
Sistova
Rasgrad
Plevna
BULGARIA
Shumla
Osmanbazar
Lovcha
Tirnova
Orkhanie
Trojan
SOFIA
Hainkoi
Shipka
Jeni-Zagra
Eski-Zagra
Philippopolis
TURKEY
Adrianople
01
02
03
04
05
06
07
08

06 Gurko goes on the offensive

Leaving a garrison at Shipka Pass, Gurko advances south towards the town of Kazanlak. On 29 July, his Bulgarian troops clash with an advanced guard of Ottoman forces under Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha at Stara Zagora [Eski-Zagra]. Heavy casualties force Gurko to withdraw via the Khankoi Pass.

07 Süleyman attacks Shipka Pass

Having swelled his army to around 38,000 men, Süleyman advances on the Shipka Pass and attacks the Russian defenders on 21 August. Repeated assaults follow but Ottoman forces are unable to retake the pass. After suffering thousands of killed and wounded, Süleyman departs in September to replace Mehemet Ali.

08 Gurko takes Sofia

In December, the Russian garrison at Shipka Pass learn that the Ottoman defenders at Plevna had finally surrendered. Gurko goes on the offensive, leading an army of over 65,000 men through the Araba Konak Pass, and capturing Sofia on 4 January 1878.

© Alamy

A view of the Balkan Mountains from the Shipka Pass memorial near the peak

Map by Rooo Espin

the Ottomans counter-attacked to retake Wooded Hill, inflicting such casualties on the Russian 35th Infantry Regiment that Radetsky felt compelled to abandon the position. Fighting for the Shipka Pass now died down, but Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha was still determined to retake it.

SÜLEYMAN'S SECOND ATTACK

The attacks on Shipka Pass had proved costly for Süleyman, losing in the region of 10,000 killed or wounded. For the next three weeks he reorganised his forces and gathered reinforcements for a renewed assault. During that time, Süleyman received orders from Mehemet Ali Pasha to march his army into northern Bulgaria where the bulk of the fighting of the war was taking place. Süleyman, hellbent on retaking the pass, ignored his superior and continued his preparations for another attack.

On 17 September, Süleyman once again ordered his men to attack Mount St Nicholas. Despite slippery conditions caused by recent rains, the Ottoman troops captured some of the forward Russian trenches, but they remained unable to reach the top. The Russians counter-attacked and drove the Ottomans off. Again, the Ottomans attacked only to be repulsed once more. This cycle continued without success. Süleyman's renewed assault had cost him another 3,000 men. Despite his failure to recapture the Shipka Pass, Süleyman was promoted to command Ottoman forces in northern Bulgaria following the sacking of Mehemet Ali. He departed having not achieved the goal he so desperately wanted.

OTTOMAN DEFEAT

As winter approached, the defenders on Shipka Pass were withdrawn and replaced by fresh troops. For those now defending the pass, life in the snow proved miserable. Many became sick. However, there was good news for the freezing defenders when they learned that the Ottoman fortress at Plevna had finally surrendered in December. The end of the war was in sight.

Gurko now went on the offensive, leading an army of over 65,000 through the Araba Konak Pass, capturing Sofia on 4 January 1878. Moving on, he marched south through the Balkan Mountains. He relieved Radetsky at Shipka after which both generals worked in concert to trap an Ottoman army under Veissel Pasha near Sheynovo on 5 January. Veissel, greatly outnumbered, was forced to surrender on 9 January. Some 30,000 Ottoman troops were taken prisoner.

The Russo-Bulgarian defence of Shipka Pass had been an epic one and casualties were high. The Russians suffered around 13,500 killed and wounded while the Ottomans sustained something in the region of 60,000 killed, wounded or taken prisoner. The defence had also tied up thousands of Ottoman troops that might otherwise had marched to the aid of their comrades at Plevna. Had the defence of Shipka Pass failed, the outcome of the war may well have been different.

What If...

JAPAN HAD REMAINED ISOLATIONIST?

While Japan keeps its distance, overall supremacy of the region could be up for grabs

Interview by David J. Williamson

INTERVIEW WITH

© Felicty Millward

DR CHRISTOPHER HARDING

Christopher Harding is a historian and broadcaster based at Edinburgh University. His latest book is *The Japanese: A History In Twenty Lives* and he writes the IlluminAsia newsletter: **illuminasia.org**

For centuries Japan had looked inward rather than out into the wider world. There had been relative peace, and a way of life that enabled a thriving population to feel comfortable in its culture and beliefs, untainted by Western influence. But in many ways the regime was harsh and unforgiving so, inevitably, things were bound to change. But if that change had not come, or come more slowly, what would the real difference have been to Japan itself, and what impact would its continued isolation have had on the region and the wider world?

What did Japan have that the world wanted?

Not very much, which was why the world's great powers had for the most part left Japan alone up until the 1850s. It wasn't a land of fabled riches, as India was. Nor were there expected to be particularly exciting trading opportunities, as was the case with China. During Japan's period of relative isolation from the West, which began when contact was severed with Spain and Portugal in the early 1600s, the only trade with Western countries was with the Dutch. That trade pootled along nicely for 200 years or so, but didn't generate the kind of green-eyed envy back in Europe that might have led other countries to try to muscle in.

What, then, changed in the 1850s? An important part of the picture was the United States expanding westward to the point where its neighbours across the Pacific started to be of interest – both diplomatically, and in terms of assisting American shipping if it got into trouble in waters around Japan. The Russians, too, had been expanding their empire in Japan's direction, while British and French involvement in China rendered Japan of greater interest than in the past. No great power wanted to be left behind if trading and diplomatic relations with Japan were going to be established by a rival, so once things got going the momentum then became unstoppable.

What would an isolationist government of Japan have looked like with the backdrop of a modernising world?

One sign of how things might have been comes to us from 1860, when the Tokugawa shogunate was still in power and they sent an embassy to the United States. Photographs show samurai with their kimono and swords sitting alongside American counterparts in Western dress. Diary accounts of the embassy suggest that the Japanese visitors struggled to enjoy Western food – from 'greasy soup' to the sacrilege of rice cooked in butter – or to understand Western politics: why did the family of George Washington not still dominate the US government?

My guess is that these cultural attitudes – to food, dress, politics and the roles of men and women in society – would have

© Getty Images

Main image source: © Getty Images

RIGHT
Russia was humiliated by the Japanese victory

KEEP OUT
NOTICE
UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS
KEEP OUT

THE PAST

1603 – 1850s

TIME OF THE SHOGUN

From a fractured, warring nation, to one of relative peace through isolation from the majority of the rest of the political and economic world. The ruling dynasty of the Tokugawa shogunate was in many ways a velvet fist in an iron glove; movement in and out of the country was fiercely restricted, as was the visits of foreigners and any information from the outside world. Japan was able to settle into its own cultural and social identity. But the world was knocking on its door and wanted to come in.

1853 – 1868

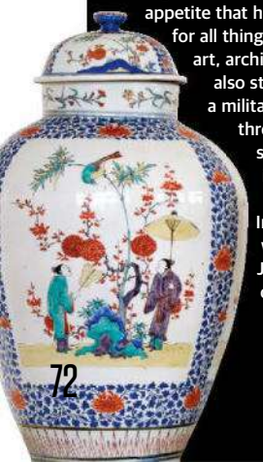
THE WORLD COMES CALLING

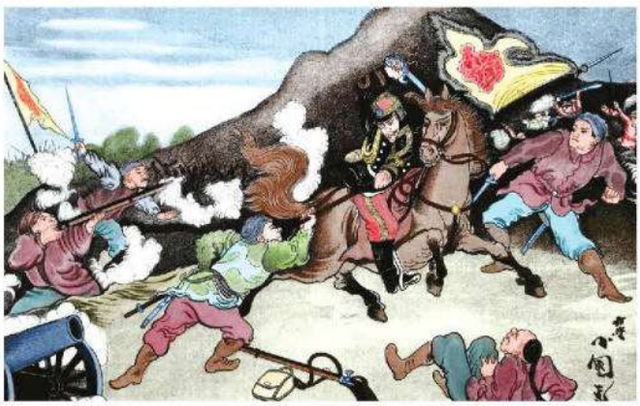
In 1853 the expedition of Commodore Matthew Perry was to add fuel to the already dwindling support for the shogunate and a move towards support for the Imperial family. His objective was to open Japanese ports to American trade; diplomatically, if possible, but with the threat of military force if necessary. In some ways he was pushing at an opening door, with a desire building in Japan to have more access to the wider world. Gunboat diplomacy lit the fuse and won the day and by 1868 the Tokugawa shogunate was no more.

1868 ONWARDS

THE MEIJI REVOLUTION

As Japan embraced Imperial government and an opening up to foreign trade, influence and support, its meteoric rise as an industrial powerhouse had begun. With rapid industrialisation it soon found itself in great demand to feed the insatiable appetite that had exploded in the West for all things oriental, be it porcelain, art, architecture, or plants. Japan also started to find its feet as a military power, firstly within, through the reform of the samurai and their status in the hierarchy of class, and the creation of the Imperial Japanese Army. It would not be long before Japan turned its attention on its neighbours, China, and Russia.





TOP
An isolated Japan would not have been a regional aggressor

ABOVE
China's Qing dynasty was no match for the Japanese army

survived for a while if Japan had remained isolated, even while it perhaps engaged in limited trade with the West. Western encroachment into East Asia made that kind of trade inevitable: the Japanese were well aware that European countries like Britain were using superiority in firepower to bend China to their will, and they were keen to avoid that same fate. So a modest trade, sufficient to bring in the funds and technological know-how required to upgrade Japan's self-defence and thus guarantee their independence, would undoubtedly have developed.

More difficult to predict are the cultural outcomes. The Tokugawa shogunate (1603 - 1868) was at pains to control the flow of information into Japan, about the outside world, and to set limits on political discourse within Japan. If Japan had opened up to limited trade alone, perhaps with some foreign experts welcomed into the country, it might not have been long before news and books about democratic change in France or Britain began to circulate, too – alongside stirring histories of the American Revolution. That doesn't mean that people in Japan would necessarily have regarded any of these foreign systems as right for their country. But it might have created pressure for a degree of political change within Japan. The best-case scenario, from the point of view of the Tokugawa shoguns, would have been a high-tech Japan adhering to traditional values and accepting traditional patterns of leadership as good and natural.

How might an isolationist policy have impacted the balance of political power regionally and globally?

It is possible that Tsarist Russia might have dominated East Asia to a greater extent, in particular the Korean peninsula, which was politically weak in the late 19th century. That, in turn, might have brought Russia close to British and French interests in China, potentially leading to conflict of some kind and even the de facto partitioning of China. The United States, too, had trading interests in China, making it all the more easy to imagine China becoming the focus of serious tensions in the region.

What would be the social and cultural gains and losses of isolation for the people of Japan?

If you had asked that question back in 1905, when a successfully modernised Japan had just defeated a great power, a lot of people in Japan would have said that they had made huge gains since 1868 – in education, science, technology, prosperity and culture – and that they would not want these to have been lost through isolation.

Though if you ask that same question in the summer of 1945, at the tragic end of a war that some in Japan were inclined to believe had roots in Japan's opening to a meddling Western world back in the 1860s, you would have found people wishing fervently for the peaceful, less complicated hey-day of the Tokugawa shogunate. Japan then, they would have said, had been largely free of conflict, and people had had a clear sense of who they were – as a culture and a society. Opening to the West had given rise to a weaving of 'modernising' with 'Westernising', which was impossible to unpick once the process had begun. So it depends on who you ask, and when.

What are the potential consequences Japan's isolation would have on global trade and economics?

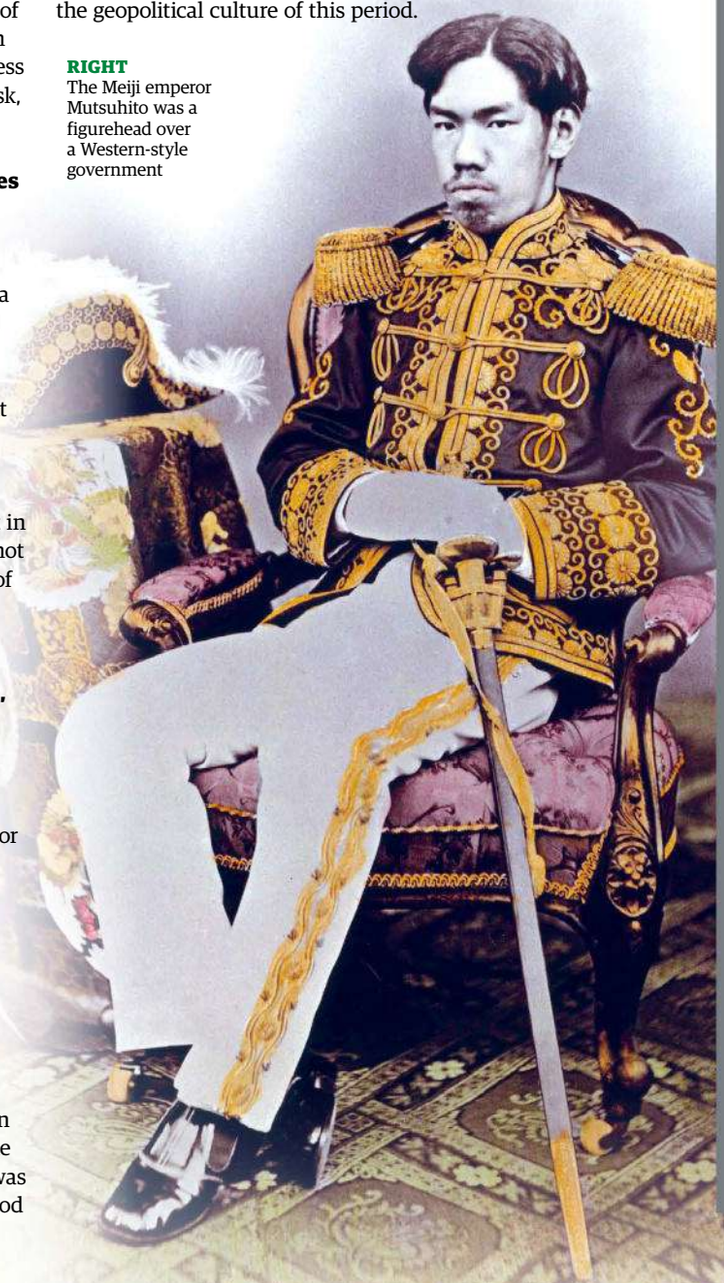
I think this impact would have been minimal, even if Japan had maintained a very strict isolation and had only traded with the Dutch, among the Western powers. Japan produced fine crafts for export – textiles, products in wood, great art – but it was (and remains) relatively poor in terms of natural resources. Culturally, an isolationist Japan would have been a loss to the world. Looked at in terms of pure economics, however, I'm not sure that there would have been much of a difference.

Would world powers have allowed Japan to remain isolated, and if not, what would they potentially have done about it?

The big fear among Japanese who advocated for opening up their country in the 1850s and 1860s was that the tenor of global politics was now such that no country could avoid having relations of some kind with the major players like Great Britain. The only question, they argued, was who got to set the terms of that relationship.

China had, for centuries, been a kind of political and cultural big brother to Japan, so it was truly shocking for the Japanese to see what a policy of isolation had done to that country. Add to that the fact that Russian and American power was extending towards East Asia in this period – America westwards across the Pacific; Russia eastwards – and it is unthinkable that given Japan's location and geography these powers would have left it entirely alone. This was the era of 'gunboat diplomacy', after all.

I expect that you would have seen elevated talk of free trade alongside British, American and other warships sailing in and out of Japanese harbours, either trying to strike deals with regional lords – who held significant power in Japan, at this point – or making violent threats. After all, when the American commodore Matthew C Perry arrived in 1853, seeking diplomatic relations, he was very clear that when he returned the following year for an answer to his overture he expected to hear a 'yes' – or else there would be war. That tells you pretty much all you need to know about the geopolitical culture of this period.



RIGHT
The Meiji emperor Mutsuhito was a figurehead over a Western-style government

THE POSSIBILITY

1894

NO BROKEN CHINA

Should Japan have remained isolated, at least in part, then its regional ambitions may well have been very different. The conflict with China over Korea in 1894-5 may never have happened. The humiliation of the actual war caused the Chinese Qing dynasty untold damage, which may have been avoided altogether if Japan had not been an aggressor. If Chinese political and military reformers had not had the example of a successfully modernising Japan across the water, the Qing imperial dynasty might have survived rather longer than it did.

1904 – 1917

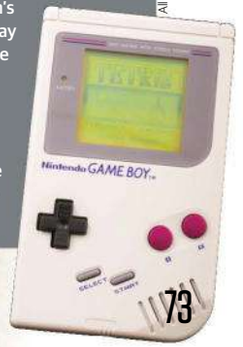
HALF A REVOLUTION

Despite Japan's emerging overseas ambitions, Imperial Russian defeat by the developing military nation was regarded as preposterous by the Tsar. The humiliation for the Russian people was difficult to take, and unrest soon spread. Although quashed by the Imperial forces, the seed for further, even more menacing conflict had been sown. Lenin referred to 1905 as a 'dress rehearsal'. But if Japan had not broken its relative isolation to realise regional ambitions, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 may not have happened; there would have been no shock of Russian defeat and perhaps no revolution in Russia in 1905.

1941 – 1980

GAMING OVER

If we really wanted to test our imaginations, then a relatively isolated Japan, developing and modernising more slowly, may not have had the ambition or strength to attack Pearl Harbor in 1941, thereby keeping the USA out of the war, and leaving the Nazis to control Western Europe. Furthermore, without the financial support from the US and Allies to rebuild post-war, and their own passion to do so, Japan's meteoric industrialisation may never have happened. There would be no mass market revolutionary electronics that became the mainstay of a whole generation, and which paved the way for the high-tech world in which we now live.



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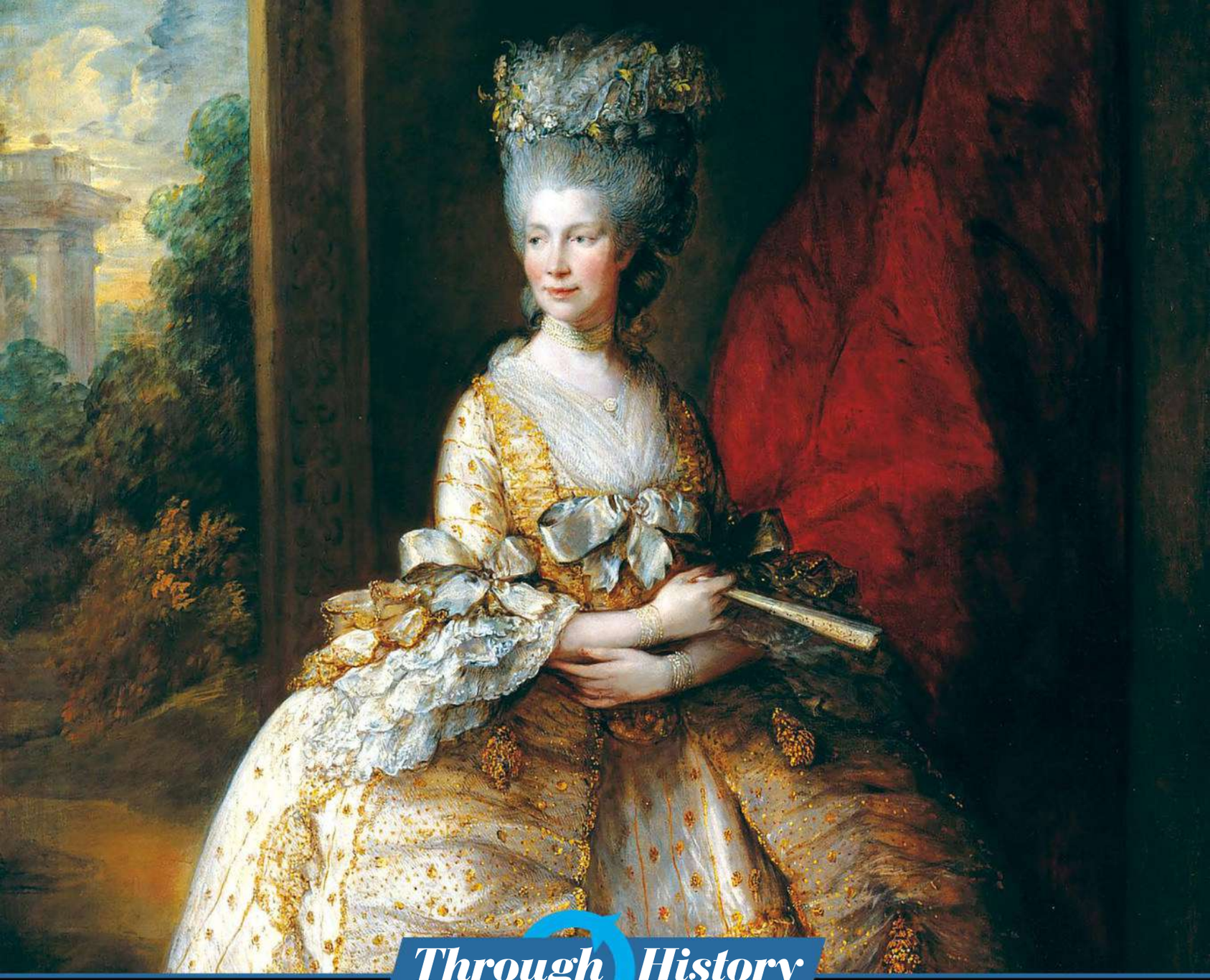


Through History

STYLE AND SOCIETY

A new exhibition at Buckingham Palace displays the best of Georgian fashion

In the Georgian era, the dress of the royal court took on an exaggerated appearance. Dresses were bigger and wider, hair styles were taller, and jewellery and accessories were overstated and elaborately decorated. These styles were all influenced and enabled by the entertainment, trade and technological developments of the era, not only among the elite but also across wider British society. As courtly fashion started to become more outdated, the upper classes began to look at the styles of the lower classes, who were dressing for the new entertainment venues of the time such as theatres and coffee houses, for inspiration.

In a new exhibition, displayed in The Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace, the world of Georgian fashion is being presented to the public through immaculately preserved apparel of the period alongside stunning paintings and related artefacts of interest. Style & Society: Dressing the Georgians showcases the fashion of the Georgian period, and will also demonstrate how the Georgians paved the way for trends we still recognise today, highlighting the first influencers and stylists who emerged during the era. Bringing together over 200 works from the Royal Collection, the exhibition is a treat for fashion enthusiasts and history buffs alike.

All images courtesy of: Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023, unless stated otherwise

QUEEN CHARLOTTE

This portrait, which usually hangs in the White Drawing Room at Windsor Castle, forms the heart of the exhibition. Depicting the extremely glamorous and stylish Queen Charlotte, the painting epitomises female fashion at the Georgian royal court.

ST JAMES'S PARK AND THE MALL

New fashion trends developed throughout every level of society during the Georgian period. This painting of St James's Park and the Mall, Georgian England's most fashionable meeting place, shows a crowd of Georgians from across the class spectrum wearing their own styles.

FOREIGN MATERIALS

As overseas trade developed in the Georgian period, more exotic materials became available. Here, Madame de Pompadour, Louis XV's mistress, wears a floral silk gown. It is thought that the silk used to make her dress might have been imported from China.

COURT GOWN

This dress is similar in style to the one worn by Queen Charlotte in the portrait from Windsor Castle. It is displayed alongside the portrait in the exhibition to show what one of these gowns would have looked like. Stunningly preserved, this gown would have been worn at Charlotte's court.

© Fashion Museum Bath

MEN'S SUITS

▲ This red suit looks much like the one worn in Gainsborough's painting of Fischer. The silk and velvet outfit was fashionable during the majority of the Georgian era, but waned in popularity at the end of the period when trousers began to become the apparel of choice for wealthy men.

© Fashion Museum Bath

JOHANN CHRISTIAN FISCHER

▼ In this painting of musician Johann Christian Fischer by Thomas Gainsborough, the subject of the piece is depicted wearing knee breeches. Breeches of this kind became popular among upper class men, but were originally a working-class garment.

EXAGGERATED FASHION

▶ Georgian fashion trends tended to be extreme in their designs. This satirical piece, which dates to 1784, is called *New Invented Elastic Breeches* and shows a larger gentleman being hauled into a tiny pair of leather breeches by his tailors.

INFLUENCE FROM ABROAD

▼ Depicting the actor David Garrick and his wife Eva-Maria Veigel, this painting by William Hogarth highlights how styles from abroad influenced the British. Veigel wears a striking yellow gown; yellow was popular in China because of its association with the emperor and thus became popular in Georgian England during a craze for chinoiserie.

Style & Society: Dressing the Georgians is open until 8 October 2023 at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London.

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

© Universal Pictures, © Alamy

OPPENHEIMER

Christopher Nolan's latest history-themed blockbuster is an artistic triumph

Certificate: 15 **Director:** Christopher Nolan **Cast:** Cillian Murphy, Emily Blunt, Matt Damon **Released:** Out now

"Genius is no guarantee of wisdom." If there's a single line of dialogue in Christopher Nolan's biopic about the life of J Robert Oppenheimer that hits the bullseye, it is this one. Oppenheimer, that American Prometheus who led the scientists at Los Alamos into shepherding in the age of the atom bomb was a genius undoubtedly, but our potential for self-annihilation weighs heavily on the film, lending it a profound sense of dread, a painful awareness that the culmination of three centuries' worth of pioneering physics turned out to be all about horror and destruction (talk about a pyrrhic victory).

Shot on 70mm with IMAX cameras, using both colour and monochrome stock to delineate timelines (pre-war and post-war), *Oppenheimer* (2023), Nolan's latest cinematic endeavour, is another thoroughly gripping epic and easily the best project of his career to date alongside 2017's similarly war-themed *Dunkirk*. The exquisite movie-making craft on display is what we've come to expect from a master filmmaker like Nolan. This is at times a blockbuster that plays out like a grand symphony of images (the test sequence is of course a centrepiece moment), its visual power is truly mighty. Also for a film centred on unlocking the scientific mysteries of our universe, the 70mm stock cleverly lends a fitting spectral, radiating glow to the imagery. If there's an opportunity to see this in its optimum 70mm format, take it.

What's most remarkable about its three-hour running time too, is how the storytelling and editing boasts a riveting continuous propulsive rhythm. Essentially, what Nolan has done is create suspense and thrills out of a narrative that is mainly lots of men talking in rooms, by cutting it like it's one long trailer, leaving us with an impressionistic take on a life of historic events. This fragmentary, time-jumping approach allows a real energy to thrive, motoring us through a shadowy world of complex science and global politics.

Nolan brought experimental techniques into mainstream Hollywood from early in his career, from his breakout *Memento* (2000) to mind-bending sci-fi thriller *Inception* (2010). And he's gotten away with it by virtue of delivering moments that beguile or wow – so much so his European-style approach to filmmaking is tolerated, sometimes because it's rendered subtle and sneaky, like a magician's trick.

Cillian Murphy's pensive portrayal of a man with the fate of the world on his shoulders is superb. Oppenheimer was a strange fellow who didn't need friends, he had quantum physics and his beloved New Mexico. Everything else came second (including lovers and his wife and children). But he wasn't emotionally cold or so brainy he was almost alien. *Oppenheimer* is actually brilliantly anti-hagiographic, depicting Oppenheimer's arrogant and self-destructive tendencies via a smarmy attitude towards authority figures and shiftiness when it comes to interpreting and remembering his own past. But genius is no guarantee of wisdom, remember? History-based movies can often fall into hero-worship or gloss over more uncomfortable aspects. Nolan boldly made 'genius is no guarantee of wisdom' his new movie's central premise. ***MC***

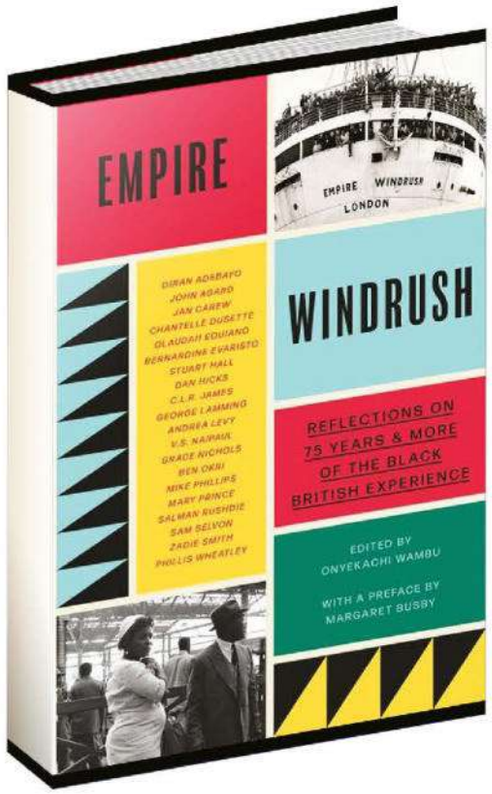
★★★★★

Reviews by
Martyn Conterio, Jonathan Gordon, Emily Staniforth, Callum McKelvie

EMPIRE WINDRUSH

A collection that brings context to Caribbean migration

Author: Onyekachi Wambu **Publisher:** Weidenfeld & Nicolson
Price: £25 **Released:** Out now


EMPIRE
WINDRUSH
REFLECTIONS ON 75 YEARS & MORE OF THE BLACK BRITISH EXPERIENCE
EDITED BY ONYEKACHI WAMBU
WITH A PREFACE BY MARGARET BUSBY

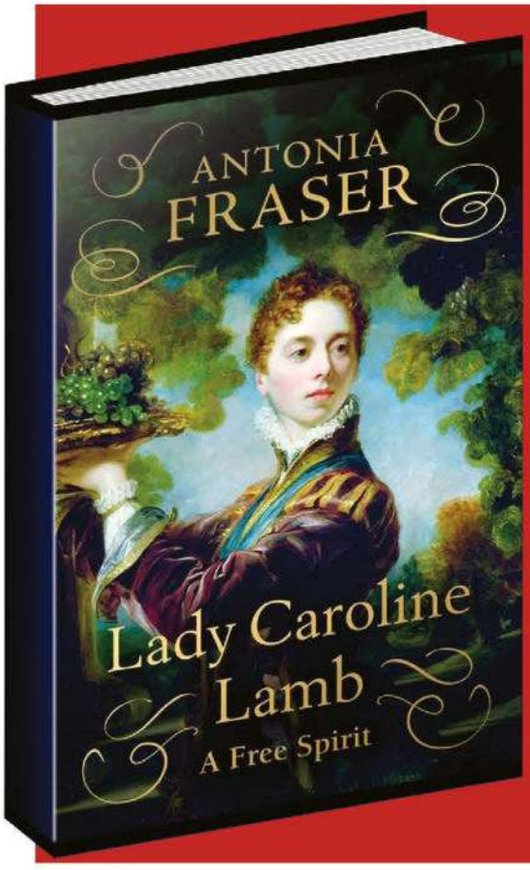
This is Wambu's second collection of writings relating to the Empire Windrush's arrival in Britain in 1948. The first, *Empire Windrush: Fifty Years Of Writing About Black Britain*, was released by the journalist and writer in 1998. As with the first book, Wambu is the curator of a collection of writing that connects to the Windrush story, although on this occasion that connection spreads out a little further.

What we get is a selection of authors and thinkers telling their stories from across time and reflecting different immigrant and ethnic experiences. Early voices of Black liberation such as Olaudah Equiano and Mary Prince give us accounts of their experiences of slavery, which helped to change the tide of feeling in Britain before its abolition. We also have more modern names like Salman Rushdie, Booker-prize winning author Bernardine Evaristo and Zadie Smith with their unique points of view. Each extract is introduced by Wambu, offering analysis and rationale.

What this selection of essays, poems, narrative fiction and other writing gives us is a wider context for the importance of the Empire Windrush. It connects the dots of British history, from imperialism and slavery to modern migration, helping to give insight into why the Empire Windrush has become such a significant milestone in Black British experience.

As this book outlines, the Windrush in and of itself is actually only a small fraction of the story, but it is also the culmination of so much. It represented the empire folding back on itself, bringing with it a new generation of people who felt a connection with Britain and wanted to make it their home. ***JG***

★★★★☆



LADY CAROLINE LAMB: A FREE SPIRIT

The fascinating biography of an ostentatious and non-conforming Georgian woman

Author: Antonia Fraser **Publisher:** Weidenfeld & Nicolson
Price: £25 **Released:** Out now

A Georgian aristocrat and author, Lady Caroline Lamb, born in 1785, led a remarkable life. Remembered as the obsessed lover of the poet Lord Byron, Caroline Lamb's life was extraordinary as she forged her way as a wife, writer and woman of high society. Antonia Fraser's beautifully written biography provides a well-rounded portrait of this extraordinary, multi-faceted woman.

Fraser paints a vivid picture of the close-knit family Caroline was born into, full of strong-willed women, including her aunt – the infamous Lady Georgiana Spencer, the Duchess of Devonshire. The romantic affairs of her mother and aunt set the tone for Caroline's later indiscretions: though Caroline married for love to William Lamb, she engaged in public friendships and romantic entanglements with other men. However, it was her penchant for dressing as a male page that contributed most to her notoriety. Her cross-dressing gave her the freedom she desired, even allowing her to enter the Houses of Parliament to watch her husband speak.

Her intense affair with Byron is thoroughly explored, but it is the other details of Caroline's personality that make this biography a fascinating read. Her kindness to others, her intellectual prowess, her devotedness as a mother and her surprising friendship with the Duke of Wellington make Caroline's story more human. Through Caroline's writings, and those of the people closest to her, Fraser's research incorporates all the scandal one could hope for, while also leaving the reader knowing Caroline as a ground-breaking woman searching for the freedom to behave as she wished. ***ES***

★★★★★

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HISTORY WAR RECOMMENDS...

Out now!

Burgenland

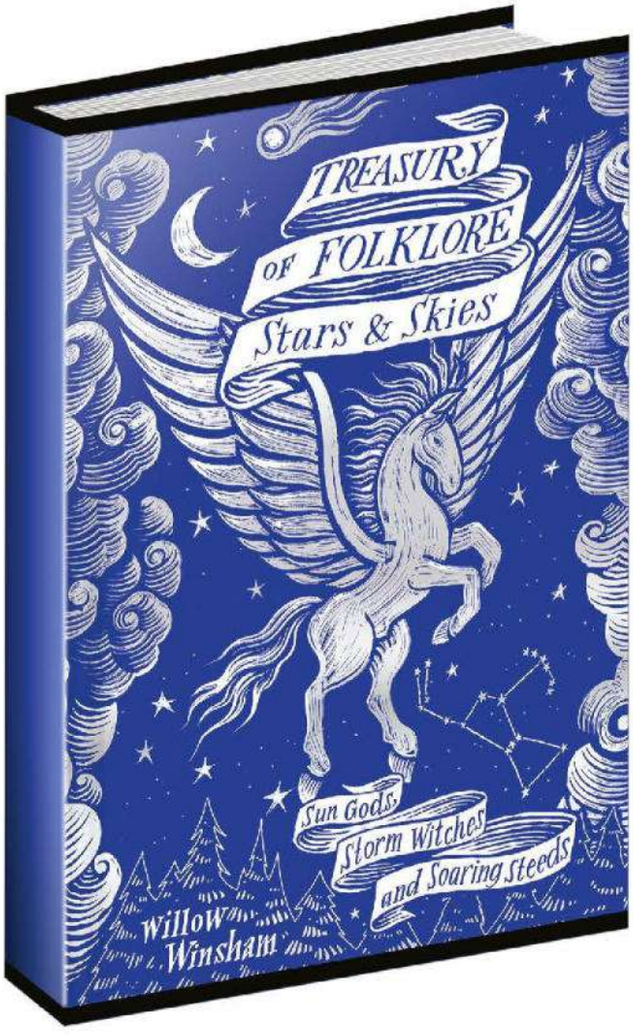
Author David Joseph **Price** £25 **Publisher** Amberley

David Joseph's new book is a deeply moving history that connects the reader to a variety of stories and individuals. Much of this book is based on Joseph's ambition to trace back and retell the story of his family and the Jewish people of the Burgenland area. This book also serves as a valuable reminder that Jewish people still face persecution today and it also demonstrates to us that the actions of people and events that occur today can have wide-ranging repercussions deep into the future.

TREASURY OF FOLKLORE: STARS AND SKIES

A perfect introduction to a multitude of myths, traditions and lore relating to the space above our heads

Author: Willow Winsham **Publisher:** Batsford Books **Price:** £14.99 **Released:** 17 August 2023



"Winsham's expressive retelling of these ancient tales and fables creates an almost campfire feel"

On 18 June 2015, Dee Dee Chainey and Willow Winsham founded the online hashtag; #FolkloreThursday. What they started resulted in no less than an internet phenomenon, familiar to anyone active online and with an interest in myth and tradition. A website and podcast soon followed and in 2021, the pair launched a series of books. Whereas the previous volumes were earthbound in their scope (the first focusing on the sea and rivers and the second on woodlands and forests) this, the third, looks to the world above and delves deep into the myths and traditions of the stars and skies.

The book is split into two parts, 'The Stars and Moon' and 'Sumptuous Skies', with each section discussing a multitude of folklore, myths and legends. In the former, Winsham explores such topics as sun gods and goddesses and the various superstitions surrounding shooting stars. In the latter she begins with an exploration of Pegasus and other similar myths, before concluding with a look at more contemporary 'cryptid' figures, the Jersey Devil and Mothman.

Those with an expert knowledge of folklore will probably not find much new here. This is not an in-depth discussion of the history behind these beliefs, nor is it a collection of folktales. Rather it is a mixture of the two. Due to the size of the topic, Winsham is forced to keep her discussion somewhat light and there is perhaps less detail than some would like. For example, the Jersey Devil and Mothman each receive barely three pages of coverage. While this might be frustrating to some, Winsham's approach seems to be to provide either an introduction to these subjects or to act as a light reference guide.

Whereas the previous books in the series had been written alongside her Folklore Thursday partner, Dee Dee Chainey, here Willow Winsham goes it alone. Winsham's writing is certainly evocative, if a little indulgent. For example, Winsham's introduction is littered with phrases such as: "The resplendent canopy of the stars". Although on first reading this somewhat extravagant language can seem a bit much, Winsham's mastery of this style quickly wins you over. Winsham is having fun with her subject and her writing encourages the reader to have fun too. Her expressive turn of phrase works when retelling these ancient tales and fables, creating an almost campfire feel.

Winsham's evocative writing is accompanied by equally evocative illustrations by Joe Mclaren. The illustrations depict dragons, witches, the woman in the moon and much more. Mclaren's illustrations complement the feel of the book wonderfully and the gorgeous package is further enhanced by the beautiful cover art.

Perfect for anyone with an interest in folklore and myth, this latest volume in Batsford Books' treasury series is another fine and engaging work. A light and breezy look at a multitude of myths and folklore, this title comes highly recommended. ***CM***

★★★★☆

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

RAGING BULL

Director: Martin Scorsese **Starring:** Robert De Niro, Joe Pesci, Cathy Moriarty **Country:** USA **Year:** 1980

Does this classic film pull any historical punches when it comes to the gory details?

VERDICT: A brutally honest biography that only cuts a few corners

01 The script for the film was based largely on the autobiography of Jake LaMotta, the professional boxer played by De Niro in the film. As a result, it is thought to be largely accurate to the events of the boxer's life, especially in the boxing scenes.

02 As seen in the film, LaMotta acts violently towards his first wife and others during his life. LaMotta was not enamoured of the portrayal of his violent behaviour when he saw the film, but his wife told him he had been worse than the film showed.

03 LaMotta meets his second wife, still a teenager, at a local swimming pool. This is accurate as Vikki was 16 when she married the 24-year-old LaMotta. Her autobiography, released posthumously in 2006, confirms many of LaMotta's accounts.

04 LaMotta spends much of the film with his brother Joey, until he accuses him of having an affair with Vikki. The Joey character is actually a merger of Jake's real brother and his friend (and co-author of the autobiography) Pete Savage.

05 De Niro trained with LaMotta for months in order to match his fighting style and physique for the film's boxing scenes, and then went on a food tour in Europe to put on 60lbs to play the ageing LaMotta, doing comedy in his club.

All images: © Alamy

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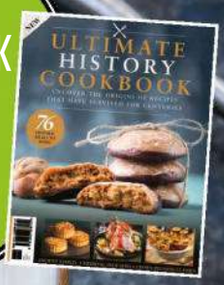
THE ULTIMATE HISTORY COOKBOOK
available now



Did you know?

The name appears to be derived from the Wampanoag word msíckquatash, which means boiled corn kernels.

Ingredients

- Vegetable oil or lard
- 2 cups of corn, tinned, frozen or fresh
- 2 cups of lima beans (or black beans/kidney beans)
- 1 large onion
- 2 medium peppers, de-seeded and chopped
- 1 or 2 fresh chillies (depending on your heat preference)
- 1 cup of butternut squash, cut into small pieces
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp cumin
- 2 sprigs of fresh thyme
- Sea salt and black pepper to taste
- ½ cup of chicken or vegetable stock

Main image: © Shutterstock
Inset image: © Getty Images

SUCCOTASH

A CLASSIC AND ADAPTABLE NATIVE AMERICAN DISH, NEW ENGLAND, USA, 17TH CENTURY - PRESENT

Making use of some of the most abundant and easiest to preserve ingredients around, succotash was an all-year-round meal popular among indigenous peoples in North America, especially in the north east of what is now the United States. While the exact dishes at the first Thanksgiving meal are unknown, it's commonly believed that this was very likely to be one of them. A stew made from fresh beans and corn in the summer and dried ingredients in the winter, it was easy to make and highly nutritious. In fact, it proved a long-lasting favourite for this reason, even being popular in the Great Depression.

There are lots of variations on this recipe involving meat and fish or peppers and tomatoes. Squash is also frequently added as beans, corn and squash were known as the Three Sisters, as their plants complemented each other when growing side by side. Original recipes would have used tough field corn and shell beans, but sweetcorn and lima beans are the modern substitutes.

METHOD

01 If you're using fresh corn and beans or dried beans, pre-cook these first.

02 Heat some vegetable oil or lard in a large pan or wok on a high temperature until smoking.

03 Add the corn, peppers and onions and cook for about six to seven minutes or until the onions start to brown.

04 Reduce the heat and add the garlic, squash, cumin, thyme. Cook for an additional four minutes, stirring frequently.

05 Now add the stock and the beans and simmer this mixture until the squash is tender and the stock has reduced a little.

06 Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve with a little fresh coriander and a lime wedge.

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